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Near East & South Asia

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Thursday
1 August 1996

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-149 *1 August 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Denounces Israeli Court Decision

NC3107161896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1455 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 31 Jul (MENA)—The Arab League has denounced the Israeli High Court's recent decision to allow Jews to pray in the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque for the first time in the history of the holy city.

In a statement today, the Arab League secretariat general warned Israel of the consequences of this decision, emphasizing that it constitutes an open breach of all UN resolutions that consider any change in the status of the holy city as null and void. These include UN Security Council resolutions 252 and 267, in addition to the agreements that the Israeli Government signed with the Palestinian National Authority in Oslo and Washington.

The secretariat urged the international community that supports the peace process, the two cosponsors of the Madrid conference, and the European Union to take the lead and pressure Israel not to effect any changes in the status of Jerusalem. This is in order to avoid the subsequent damage that will affect the peace efforts and the coexistence between the region's peoples if this decision is carried out. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Visit Libya Soon, Terms Syria Visit Positive

JN3107144196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Report by Sa'id 'Ayyad in Bethlehem]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Legislative Council will resume its sessions shortly. The deputies will continue the debate they have been holding for two days on the interim draft constitution.

President Yasir 'Arafat attended part of the morning session. He delivered an important, historic speech in which he briefed the council on the results of his recent tour of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The president praised Palestinian democracy. He said what happened at the council yesterday was part of this democracy. [passage omitted]

President 'Arafat announced that he will visit Libya soon. He said he obtained a promise from Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to stop the deportation of Palestinians from Libya. He said the promise was made during their meeting at the recent Cairo summit. He said: We are trying to overcome all the artificial barriers and walls that appeared suddenly between us and Arab brothers.

President 'Arafat called on the Kuwaiti Government to overcome what happened dung the Gulf war. He said: I hope that the Kuwaiti brothers will overcome what happened, because the Palestinian people have been the losers as a result. He described Palestinian-Gulf relations as excellent. He expressed happiness with his recent visit to Saudi Arabia and his meeting with King Fahd.

The president indicated that his visit to Syria and his meeting with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad were positive and important. He said: We have restored the good relationship that we have missed for so long. He added: We did not cause the rupture. The visit made all such circumstances part of the past. [passage omitted]

In a separate development, President Yasir 'Arafat received U.S. Consul Edward Abington at his residence this afternoon. The two men discussed bilateral relations.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Delivers Speech; Quray' Withdraws Resignation

JN3107122696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1110 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Report by Sa'id 'Ayyad in Bethlehem; from the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat delivered an important speech during a Legislative Council session in Bethlehem Municipality this morning. The president briefed members of the Legislative Council on his recent tour of Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. President 'Arafat said what happened during the Legislative Council's session yesterday evening is part of Palestinian democracy. He characterized the results of the Arab summit in Cairo last month as extremely positive, noting that the conference unanimously supported the peace process, the PLO, and the National Authority.

The president said he made efforts to arrange a meeting between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir to heal the rift between the two fraternal countries as part of restoring Arab solidarity and cohesion. The president added: We defended and made efforts to bolster genuine Arab unity. The president commended the Iraqi position, which matched its responsibilities for the sake of Arab unity.

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Within the context of promoting national unity among the PLO factions, President 'Arafat asked Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department, to meet with the 10 Palestinian factions in Damascus. On rumors that Palestinians will be settled in neighboring states, President 'Arafat said there is no home for Palestinians except their homeland, Palestine.

On Palestinian-Kuwaiti relations, which have been severed since the Gulf war in 1990, President 'Arafat urged the Kuwaiti Government to move past those events. He said the Palestinian people were the biggest losers, since the war cost them more than $12 billion.

The president also said that Jerusalem is part of the 1967-occupied territories and that there will be no flexibility on the issue of Jerusalem. The president praised the positions of the EU states and the seven industrial nations, as well as the positions of U.S. President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister John Major, and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the Palestine question.

Commenting on the latest developments since the Likud's assumption of the Israeli Government, led by Binyamin Netanyahu, and his meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi, the president said he agreed with the Israeli foreign minister on five points, including releasing prisoners and forming a higher committee for negotiations. However, the Israelis have not yet implemented what was agreed on.

Upon his arrival at the Legislative Council hall, President 'Arafat was given extended applause and warmly welcomed by the speaker and members of the Legislative Council. Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Legislative Council, accompanied President 'Arafat from his residence to the Legislative Council hall. Quray' said at the outset that he complied with the decision of the members and of President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and announced that he will continue as speaker of the Legislative Council. Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] said the occupation authorities prevented deputy Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir, from the occupied city of Jerusalem, from crossing a military point at the northern entrance of the city of Bethlehem and turned him back. Deputy 'Abd-al-Qadir took another road, but the soldiers stopped him again and prevented him from getting to the Legislative Council hall.

The Legislative Council continues its debate of the articles of the constitution.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Agreement Reached on Yasin's Release

TA3107141396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 0930 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat stated at noon today that the release of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin was agreed on with the Israeli side and that the Palestinian side is now awaiting the implementation of what has been agreed on.

Our correspondent Yasir 'Atilah reports that 'Arafat made this statement upon entering the Bethlehem Municipality where the Palestinian Legislative Council is holding its deliberations. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Concludes 'Constructive' Visit to Germany

JN3107161896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation, concluded an official four-day visit to Germany. He said the visit was successful and constructive. Dr. Sha'th said Germany is committed to extending 15 million marks to develop the Gaza International Airport and another 25 million marks to complete the Hebron water network project and al-Birah sewerage system and supply the Gaza International Hospital with the equipment it needs.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Hails Agreement on German Development Grants

MM0108103696 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Aug 96 p 5

[Report by Husayn Hijazi in Gaza: "Sha'th Tells AL-HAYAH: The Germans Share the Palestinians' Concerns About Israeli Procrastination and Settlements Expansion"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian National Authority [PNA] minister of planning and international cooperation, told AL-HAYAH that he has ended "good and very successful" talks held over the past two days with German officials with regard to agreeing on the annual financial grant that the German Government will give the PNA for 1996. He stated that Germany has agreed to give 47 million German Marks [DM] for development and investment projects in the Palestinian territories, in addition to DM13 million for projects which have been agreed and contracted previously, and for which the allocated funds had not been transferred.

Under the new agreement signed by Sha'th with the German Government in Bonn, DM15 million have

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been allocated for building and equipping the Gaza international airport, and DM25 million to complete infrastructure projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These include a grant for sewerage installations in Hebron, a sewerage network in al-Birah, and advanced equipment for the Gaza international hospital. The third part of the financial grant, includes DM12 million for various projects, technical assistance, equipment and machines, and study grants, and is allocated as follows: DM2.5 million for the Bethlehem tourist project, DM3 million for the solid waste disposal project in the central part of the Gaza Strip, DM2.5 million for the Hebron municipality, DM0.9 million to reduce the water waste in Tulkarm and Janin, and DM2 million for the projects of nongovernmental organizations in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. [all figures as published]

The German grant also includes DM5 million to cover the costs of study programs, technical assistance, and training cycles for technical cadres, in addition to 20 grants for Palestinian cadres and students to study in Germany.

Sha'th, who seemed satisfied with what he believes to be strong German support for the PNA particularly at this stage, added that the German government has shown its readiness to give guarantees against political risks on loans to the PNA, through the "Hermes" government institution, which has indicated that it is willing to give guarantees to German investors wishing to start investment projects with Palestine, by ratifying the agreement on investment guarantee. This agreement is expected to be ratified during President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Germany next September.

During his visit to Bonn, Dr. Sha'th held a series of meetings with German officials who told the Palestinian official that they share the Palestinians' concerns about Israeli procrastination with regard to implementing the previous agreements and with regard to expanding the settlements around Jerusalem and the continuation of the closure. Sha'th also secured the German Government's support for the Palestinian position on European partnership, due to be signed before the end of this year, in addition to doubling the quota of Palestinian flowers that Germany imports from the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Tells Council Jumayyil's Interrogators To Be Tried

JN0108072896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat ordered the trial of three interrogators for torturing the detainee Mahmud Jumayyil. During the Palestinian Legislative Council session in Bethlehem, 'Arafat said he issued an immediate order to refer three officers to the military public prosecutor, and the issue is being investigated. 'Arafat emphasized that he will not be lenient toward any error and that everyone is equal under the law, adding that anyone involved in this matter will be interrogated and punished.

Palestinian Affairs: Further on Death of Fatah Hawk; 2d Member 'Disappeared'

TA0108082996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Jon Immanuel]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian Authority [PA] President Yasir 'Arafat told the Palestinian Council yesterday that he has ordered an inquiry into the torture of Mahmud Jumayyil, 26, who was transferred from Junayd Prison in Nabulus to Ramallah Hospital in a coma, with a fractured skull and signs of burn on his torso. Late last night, Jumayyil was pronounced dead from his injuries.

'Arafat said three officers of the coastal police who have offices in the prison have been arrested.

Jumayyil was part of the self-styled Ahmad Tabuk group of Fatah Hawks, which terrorized merchants in Nabulus last year. He was arrested when the Palestinian Police moved into the city in December, and was held in Jericho in good health, until he was transferred to Junayd last weekend.

According to human rights activist Bassam 'Id, Jumayyil was transferred to Ramallah Hospital with the fake identity of Ahmad Sabah from Janin, but a visitor identified him and informed the family.

Jumayyil was very popular and "if he dies, there could be an intifadah in Nabulus" against the PA, 'Id said.

His identity uncovered, Jumayyil was transferred yesterday to Hadassah-University Hospital, 'En Kerem.

A second member of the Tabuk gang, Nasir Jum'a, apparently disappeared last weekend from Jericho jail, and his family is concerned about his fate.

Jumayyil's death makes seven the number of Palestinians who have died in Palestinian Police custody since the PA took office in May 1994. After each death, an inquiry has been announced, "but to this day not one has published its findings. This means there was no inquiry. All six were described as collaborators to win popular support," 'Id said.

Haydar Shuqayrat, a lawyer who heads the Land and Water Establishment, called for an independent investigation into the Jumayyil case.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas Aide Confirms Final Status Blueprint

TA0108090196 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Aug 96 p 3

[Report by news agencies]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Labor government was ready to accept the creation of a Palestinian state, MK [Knesset Member] Yosi Beilin said yesterday.

In exchange, the Palestinians would have agreed to Israel's annexation of a small 0ortion of the West Bank and dropped demands to establish their capital in East Jerusalem, he said.

Beilin said he worked out these informal understandings in meetings last fall with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's deputy, Mahmud 'Abbas [Abu-Mazin]. [passage omitted]

Ibrahim Khurayshah, a senior official in 'Abbas's office, confirmed most of the details of the blueprint outlined by Beilin. He said both 'Arafat and Shim'on Peres had expressed reservations about some aspects of the understandings, but felt they could serve as the basis for negotiations.

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Ilan dismissed the understandings as "an intellectual exercise," since neither side had formally endorsed them. [passage omitted]

Khurayshah said in exchange for the West Bank land, Israel was willing to give the Palestinians some territory near the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian negotiator also confirmed that the Palestinians agreed in principle that no settlements be dismantled, and that Israel would make special security arrangements for those settlers remaining under Palestinian sovereignty.

Beilin said the Palestinians dropped demands to establish their capital in East Jerusalem. Instead, the Palestinians would set up their capital in Abu-Dis, a suburb of Jerusalem, Beilin said. Israel would retain sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, but the Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem would be granted wide-ranging autonomy.

Khurayshah was more vague, saying the Palestinians wanted to establish their capital "in the area of" Jerusalem, but would not say whether this could be outside the city's current boundaries. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Radio—Israeli Troops Arrest Hebron Police Chief, Beat Others

JN0108095096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 1 Aug 96

[Report from Salim Abu-Saih in Hebron]

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of the continuous provocations and violation of agreements signed with Israel, a group of the so-called Israeli border guards stopped the car of Brigadier General Tariq Zayd, commander of the Hebron Governorate police, as he left for the Palestinian police headquarters located in al-Zahiriyah town. The incident occurred in the al-Ha'uz district of Hebron a short while ago.

The group stopped the commander's blue car and assaulted two of his companions in the main street while citizens and passers by watched. The detained men were the commander's aide Ghassan Zallum and his son Samir Tariq Zayd. The guards smashed the windshield of a car belonging to lawyer Nur Abu-Mayzar, who was at the site. The guards shouted insults and obscene words at them.

Lawyer Ziyad al-Sharabati, head of the National Organization's office in the south of the West Bank, who was an eyewitness to the assault, denounced the attack, saying that it is a continuation of provocations and the violation of the agreements by the Israeli side.

The attack follows the arrest two days ago of Deputy 'Abbas Zaki, member of the Fatah Central Committee.

Palestinian Affairs: Sharon's Road Plan Seen Expressing Government Policy

TA3107170696 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 31 Jul 96

[Editorial: "Sharon's Plan — Just a Beginning!" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] The new-old plan revived by Israeli Minister Ari'el Sharon for building two additional roads — the first one joining the West Bank settlements with north Jerusalem, and the second one linking the coastal plain with the settlements in the Nabulus area — is not just a plan to build two bypass roads according to the customary norm where hundreds of dunams owned by Arabs are confiscated, but apparently the plan's aims are more than what they seem at first sight and in an initial assessment.

Clearly, the matter concerns penetration into an area that was restored to the control of the Palestinian National Authority. Such penetration or intrusion fundamentally contravenes the Taba agreement and flagrantly violates

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the Israeli commitment to implement the articles of this agreement. Moreover, this proves the real Israeli intention toward the peace process. Pulling this plan out of an old drawer is not a mere coincidence, as it might appear at first glance, but is an accurate expression of a policy that opposes the continuation of the peace process and its credibility.

What draws attention, however, is that the two-roads plan was announced after Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's statements in which he canceled the decision to freeze the so-called political settlements. He declared his support for the expansion of existing settlements and for increasing the number of settlers by at least 50,000. Accordingly, Sharon's plan and Netanyahu's statements complement the new Israeli Government's policy which is supports settlement activity and encourages it at any cost.

Certainly the announcement of Sharon's plan is not merely a provocative act aimed at the Palestinian citizens and the Arab countries, but in fact is a prelude to similar acts, and we will see many during the next four years unless the Palestinians, the Arabs, and the international community can create the proper mechanism to stop these practices and return the peace process to its correct and just essence and content which, principally, protects the inalienable and legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Palestinian Affairs: Saudi Officials Endorse Call To Convene Jerusalem Committee

TA3107141596 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 31 Jul 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jerusalem, AL-AYYAM — Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the presidency, has said that officials in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia informed President Yasir 'Arafat of their support for the Palestinian stances, something that will enhance the Palestinian people's steadfastness. In a statement to AL-AYYAM, 'Abd-al-Rahim added that the Saudi officials endorsed the call to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Jerusalem Committee. Moreover, they declared their readiness to act on all levels, especially the Islamic level, to confront the Israeli violations in Jerusalem, the onslaughts against al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Israeli attempts to Judaize the city.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Nashashibi—Stock Exchange To Be Established in 2 Months

JN3107153896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 31 Jul 96 p 16

["Exclusive" report by Muhammad Khayr al-Farah in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] The minister of finance in the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] said that the Palestinian stock exchange, which has been talked about for so long, will be established within two months at the latest.

Before leaving Amman yesterday after a two-day visit to Jordan, Muhammad Zuhdi al-Nashashibi told AL-DUSTUR that the establishment of a Palestinian stock exchange will undoubtedly encourage investment in Palestine and will help greatly in making the process of buying and selling company stocks more accurate.

Al-Nashashibi noted that Israel continues to obstruct the arrival of flour shipments, which the PNA is importing from Jordan based on an earlier contract.

He said: Even though the amounts of flour we agreed to buy are very small and do not exceed 5,000 metric tonnes, Israeli obstacles prevented the arrival of the entire shipment.

He added: The entire shipment was supposed to arrive within a month, but it has already been one-and-a-half months and only 1,000 metric tonnes have arrived.

Al-Nashashibi asserted that Israel's actions in this regard are inhuman, noting that Israeli obstacles reduced the daily amount of imported flour from 250 to 70 metric tonnes. He said: We will continue to import flour from Jordan whenever it is necessary.

Al-Nashashibi denied any knowledge of recent news that the idea of establishing regional development bank in Cairo has been canceled, noting that the idea is still simmering over a low fire.

Al-Nashashibi stressed cooperation and coordination between Jordan and the PNA in preparations for the Cairo economic summit, noting that Palestinians will participate at all levels of the summit.

He said that it is important for the PNA to coordinate with Jordan regarding joint projects, especially Jordan Valley projects and food industries.

Al-Nashashibi expressed his belief that the statements of account Israel is presenting to the PNA regarding commercial deals and customs duties are not accurate enough. He noted that there are complicated problems with the Israeli side. He said that Israel is delaying

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the transfer of customs duties it collects from goods the PNA imports through Israeli ports. He added that Israel collects the value-added tax from commercial deals between the Israelis and Palestinians and pays them to the PNA through a clearing process.

During his visit to Jordan, the Palestinian minister of finance met for a while with Finance Minister Marwan 'Awad.

Al-Nashashibi said: We asked for Jordanian expertise in the field of stocks, income tax laws, and apartment ownership. Minister 'Awad expressed his willingness to offer every possible aid to the Palestinian brothers.

Al-Nashashibi added: We also asked for maps and urban plans of some Palestinian cities and villages for planning purposes because the PNA does not have them.

Al-Nashashibi noted that the PNA is considering a replanning of Palestinian cities and villages.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Syrian Envoy Visits Israel 'Secretly' To Discuss 'Lebanon-First'

TA0108061396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 pp A1, A2

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff and Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An envoy of the Syrian authorities secretly visited Israel on the eve of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to the United States and held a meeting with him. One of the issues discussed was the prime minister's proposal to reach an interim agreement in Lebanon, in the context of which the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] would withdraw from the security zone in exchange for security conditions that would ensure the quiet in the north (the "Lebanon-First" proposal).

The visit, which was held in utmost secrecy, was apparently not initiated by Israel. It seems Damascus wanted to hear first-hand whether Netanyahu had a new message concerning the peace process which he had not mentioned in public. The envoy wanted to clarify the matter prior to the prime minister's departure for Washington to confer with President Clinton. Major General Ze'ev Livne, the prime minister's aide-de-camp, and political adviser Dr. Dore Gold were in on the meeting, and at least one of them took part in it.

Gold met with Walid al-Mu'allim, the Syrian ambassador in the United States, during Netanyahu's visit to Washington. The official explanation cited for the meeting was the work of the international monitoring committee on Lebanon, but apparently the two also discussed a follow-up of the envoy's talks with Netanyahu.

Ambassador al-Mu'allim is considered close to President Hafiz al-Asad and has played a key role in the negotiations with Israel. He has close ties with the U.S. "peace team" headed by Dennis Ross. The possibility should not be ruled out that Ross was also in on the meeting in Israel.

No details are known about the contents of the secret talk, except for the fact that the prime minister raised the possibility of an interim arrangement in Lebanon which would include an IDF pullout from the security zone.

The late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin had at one time proposed an arrangement in Lebanon, but this proposal was meant to arrive at negotiations on a separate peace arrangement with Lebanon. In contrast, Netanyahu is talking about an interim arrangement with the Syrians' consent and involvement. The Israeli withdrawal is being conditioned on a pledge to stop the attacks in the north and not to hurt the South Lebanese Army.

Since the meeting, the Syrians have announced that Israel can withdraw from south Lebanon if it so wishes and that Damascus will not stand in its way. Officials in Beirut have stated that Netanyahu's proposal is "a trap" Lebanon will not fall into, which may be seen as a first rejection. In contrast, al-Asad told Ross he would like to learn more about Netanyahu's concepts. The prime minister's bureau would not comment on the report.

Yerah Tal reports: Dore Gold, the prime minister's political adviser, will arrive in Washington this weekend and meet with the peace team headed by Dennis Ross. The meetings have been described by U.S. sources as "a continuation of the efforts to promote the peace process." [passage omitted]

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Algeria

Algeria: France's de Charette Comments Upon Arrival in Algiers

LD3107201196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1800 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As I told you in the headlines, the French Foreign Affairs Minister Herve de Charette is on an official two-day visit to Algiers at the invitation of Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf, who received him this afternoon at the Houari Boumediene airport.

Interviewed by Rania Cherif at the airports's VIP lounge, the French foreign affairs minister expressed his wish to turn a new leaf in Franco-Algerian relations.

[Begin de Charette recording] It is a political visit. It is not a technical visit. We are not going to deal with any technical issues despite the fact that naturally there are some, but together we are going to try to give a new style, a new tone, and a new start to Franco-Algerian relations.

I hope that there are normal state to state relations between our two countries and also close and friendly ones. This is indeed the aim of this visit in such a way that this new start will allow us to create a stable, permanent, and warm relationship between France and Algeria.

Algeria is a major country which counts on the international scene and I hope consequently that this meeting, this work meeting, will allow us to establish this partnership between our two countries. [end recording]

Algeria: Court Gives Cartoonist Three-Year Suspended Sentence

LD3107121796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On to the LA TRIBUNE case. The court of Algiers delivered its verdict a few minutes ago. The cartoonist, Amari Chawkri, received a three-year suspended sentence, while the editor, Kheirdine Ameyar, received a one-year suspended sentence. As for the chief editor, Baya Gacemi, she has been discharged.

The court ordered that the seals placed at the headquarters of the daily LA TRIBUNE be removed.

Amari Chawkri was jailed more than 20 days ago for insulting the national emblem [flag].

Algeria: Cartoonist To Appeal Sentence

LD0108092896 Paris Radio France International in French 0630 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In Algeria, Chawki Amari, the cartoonist with the daily LA TRIBUNE, has been handed a three-year suspended sentence for insulting the national emblem. Chawki Amari had been held in custody since the beginning of July after one of his cartoons was published in LA TRIBUNE.

The cartoon depicted two men commenting on flags displayed along a street. One of them asked whether the flags had been displayed to celebrate Independence Day and the other answered that the dirty laundry had been put out.

Chawki Amari, who was released yesterday, has decided to appeal. For him, this three-year suspended sentence is like the sword of Damocles hanging above his head. That is what he said to Chantal Lorho:

[Begin recording] [Amari] If I resume work, any minor incident will mean that I will be imprisoned and things will be very difficult. Therefore, my immediate aim is to appeal and to try to have the suspended sentence reduced.

[Lorho] When you drew your cartoon, namely the Algerian flag, did you suspect you were going too far?

[Amari] Yes, but I did not suspect I would spend a month in jail. I knew I would have problems with the judiciary; I did not suspect I would spend a month in jail. Indeed, when journalists in Algeria are sent to prison, they stay for three days or one week, two weeks at the most. I have never had any problems with the authorities over my cartoons, so I wanted to know how far things could go. I know now where to draw the line; I have some knowledge of the way the judiciary works, so I think this is a good experience. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Views Peace, Need for U.S. Investment

NC3107062496 Cairo MENA in English 0142 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington, July 30 (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak said that peace is the key to the attainment of security, stability and prosperity in the Middle East.

He referred in this regard to the recent pan-Arab summit which was held in Cairo and accentuated that peace is the strategic option of the Arab nation.

Speaking at the dinner banquet hosted by Vice President Al Gore in his honor, President Mubarak underscored the importance of continuing the peace march .

He also made it clear that Egypt will carry on its work with the parties concerned, including the United States,

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to expand the scope of peace and remove any obstacle facing and maybe freezing it.

President Mubarak also referred to the economic reform efforts in Egypt and called for increasing the volume of investments after the remarkable success achieved in the field of privatization and creating the favorable atmosphere for investment.

Following is the text of the opening remark made by President Mubarak at the dinner hosted by Vice President Al Gore.

The president said it is a great pleasure for me to be here with you in this wonderful setting. Over two hundred years of history surround us. A proud history where great men pursued ideals of freedom, democracy and shared prosperity among nations. In Thomas Jefferson's words, "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations."

The glow of friendship and warmth which prevails in this gathering testifies to this great history. It also reflects the special relationship that binds our two nations, the president added.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore both personify this great friendship, born from shared goals of peace, justice and prosperity. Vice President Gore has played a pivotal role in cementing the bonds of friendship and cooperation among our two peoples. He is a statesman of vision and dedication who has worked tirelessly in order to strengthen these bonds even further. Like president Clinton, he realizes the significance of bolstering U.S.-Egyptian ties. The foresight of these two men has raised our relations to new heights of friendship and understanding, the president said.

The president further said: As you all know, Egypt attaches the utmost importance to the promotion of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. To us, this is a strategic goal and a sacred mission. Peace is the key to the achievement of security, stability and prosperity.

The peace process has made some inroads in the past few years following the convening of the Madrid conference. Among the recent developments has been the reaffirmation by the Arab leaders, during their meeting in Cairo last month, of their unequivocal support of peace. Their strategic decision was to uphold and continue the peace process, he noted.

The president stressed we will continue to work with the parties concerned, including the United States, in order to widen the scope of peace and eliminate the chances for a stalemate.

The president also said: In addition to our tireless efforts to further the cause of peace, we continue to pursue our economic reform program which we began in 1991. At this stage, we are entering the second phase of our reform program with an economy in good financial health. The budget deficit has been reduced to less than one and a half percent of GDP. Inflation stands at seven per cent. Last year, GDP grew at the projected rate of four and a half percent, and is to grow even further this year.

We believe that the stage is now set for a major take off. Our goal is sustainable and equitable growth. To achieve that, high investment rates, high productivity growth and high export growth are required, he stressed.

President Mubarak said: High investment will come through accelerated privatization, faster deregulation and an investment climate that will serve investors. It will come through higher savings for which we continue to reform our financial institutions, in banking, insurance, social security, and capital markets. These processes have begun and are now being accelerated.

The program of trade liberalization we have embarked upon will foster higher rates of productivity growth. Greater openness to the outside world is the key to improving the efficiency of resource use in our economy. It is the key to creating more jobs. A major element of future growth is the promotion of exports, he added.

President Mubarak said: We are also busy redefining the role of the government in Egypt. Government is the facilitator and the architect of the right business environment. This requires transparency in economic management and the participation of the private sector in all aspects of the economy. Egypt global outlook has been reinforced by a serious effort to build on the potentials for regional cooperation, both among Arab states and in the Middle East at large, the president added.

In the world of regional economic blocs, our regional cooperation is a must. It will be the first layer in cementing cooperation in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region, President Mubarak pointed out.

President Mubarak said the forthcoming Middle East economic conference to be held in Cairo takes on a special significance. It is the third such conference after those of Casablanca and Amman. The Cairo conference will build on the momentum for political and economic transformation taking place in the Middle East.

We expect to sign an agreement that would establish a free trade area between Egypt and the European Union. We are also conducting negotiations with other Mediterranean states. This is certain to make Egypt

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a regional trade and investment center, the president added.

The president said: Over the past years, we have built a mutually beneficial U.S.-Egyptian partnership. This development has deepened our ties and broadened the scope of our cooperation. With the help of the United States and other friendly countries, Egypt has successfully modernized its infrastructure and services.

To build on these successes, the Egyptian-American partnership is focusing on promoting human resource development, deepening economic reform, and encouraging private sector participation.

These efforts are central to the current reforms, he further said.

President Mubarak said: The U.S.-Egyptian presidential council has been instrumental in building bridges between the business communities of both countries. Since its inception, and with the support of both governments, the council has moved to make a great contribution to expanding our trade and economic cooperation.

But I must tell you in all candor, the size of U.S. investment in Egypt has fallen short of our expectations. At present it amounts to only four percent of total foreign investment. I am certain that you will agree with me that the current investment climate in Egypt warrants a much higher level of U.S. investments, he underlined.

President Mubarak said: You have definitely noticed that we have recently introduced many new measures to stimulate investment. Red tape has been significantly reduced. New incentives have been offered to investors. New areas of investment have been opened up to the private sector. We have re-structured our financial and capital markets to become effective. You need to believe that Egypt is open for business.

We look at the future with great hope and optimism. The new climate of dynamism in Egypt and the region as a whole symbolizes the emergence of a new frontier. A new horizon in which competition for excellence and the spirit of globalism will prevail.

This will bring us closer to realizing our cherished goal of peace and prosperity for all, President Mubarak added.

Egypt: Mubarak Discusses Terrorism, Jerusalem, Golan on PBS

NC3107095396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0650 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 31 Jul (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stressed that Egypt, which supports peace and was the first to sign a peace agreement with Israel, will continue to support the peace process until real stability is achieved in the region

In an interview with PBS television, the president called for resuming negotiations between Israel and the Arab parties as soon as possible, adding that the sooner the negotiations resume the better, otherwise the enemies of peace will find the fertile soil they want to continue their practices. He added that terrorist actions are always possible and that he always said this to former Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres. But, he added, this should not stop the peace process and determined efforts must be made to continue with this process.

Asked about reports that Israel intends to build roads in the Golan Heights and the West Bank, President Mubarak strongly warned against such action. He expressed his fears that this would spoil everything and thwart the efforts being made to achieve peace. He went on to say: These practices might cause more violence and terrorism. I believe that neither Israel nor any other country in the region or beyond wants more violence or terrorism.

Asked another question, the president stressed that the Jerusalem issue is a major one in the ongoing peace process and is a problem. But he expressed his belief that a "formula" can be found to solve it, one that is acceptable to the Israeli and Palestinian parties.

President Mubarak noted that terrorism has become an international phenomenon that must be confronted and resisted. He said: If the Middle East problem is solved, then this will be the most successful way to combat terrorism, because the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in the region will at the same time be the biggest victory against terrorism.

The president also belittled the importance of the Golan for Israel and its security excuses for keeping it. He said: The Golan Heights were militarily important in 1967 when war broke out between the Arabs and Israel. But no longer, since military and security considerations and criteria have changed completely.

He noted that U.S. opposition to the reelection of Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali for a second term as UN secretary general six months before the end of a very sound term shocked him. But he added that he does not want to discuss this issue, stressing that there are no problems in Egyptian-U.S. relations.

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Egypt: Musa Says Mubarak's U.S. Talks Positive, Arabs To Be Briefed

NC3107203496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1931 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who is accompanying President Husni Mubarak on his current visit to Washington, has stated that President Mubarak will hold wide contacts to notify the Arab brothers on the results of his talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and officials in the U.S. Administration. These talks underlined complete understanding on the principles that govern the peace process. In his statement, to be published in AL-AHRAM tomorrow, Musa stressed that President Mubarak's talks in Washington have completely succeeded in emphasizing understanding between Egypt and the United States on the basics of the peace process and the need to preserve the principles that govern this process. He noted that President Clinton stressed that the United States has not changed its stance following the Israeli elections and that the principle of land for peace completely governs the peace process on all tracks.

Musa said that President Mubarak's visit and the talks he held with U.S. officials are considered to be positive and useful. He said that the next step will involve intensive Egyptian contacts to coordinate with the Arab brothers. He pointed out that contacts will be held with the Palestinian brothers, Syrians, and Lebanese. He noted that we must brief the Arab brothers on the results of the talks and on the U.S. stance. He said that contacts will begin as soon as President Mubarak returns to Cairo to brief the Arab countries involved in the peace process and other Arab countries.

Egypt: Mubarak Meets Butrus-Ghali in Washington

NC3107212196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2020 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 31 Jul (MENA)—UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali met with President Husni Mubarak today. After the meeting, Butrus-Ghali said that they discussed relations between the United Nations and Egypt as well as important African and Arab issues. He also emphasized the close cooperation between Egypt and the UN.

Butrus-Ghali described the meeting with President Mubarak as extremely positive, pointing out that he met before that with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and several ministers of the official Egyptian delegation.

Egypt: MENA Reports on Mubarak Remarks to Congressmen

NC3107214596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2020 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington, 31 Jul (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stressed that developments in the Middle East underline the importance of cooperation among all parties to achieve peace, noting that the United States has a basic role to play at this stage more than at any time before. This was stated by Safwat al-Sharif, information minister and member of the official delegation accompanying President Mubarak, after a series of meetings that President Mubarak held today with U.S. Congress leaders, the speaker of the House of Representatives, chairman of the International Relations Committee at the House of Representatives and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Al-Sharif said that at these meetings President Mubarak warned of the grave consequences that may arise in the countries of the region if the peace process in the Middle East stumbles, consequences that may affect world security and stability. President Mubarak stressed the importance and need for commitment to all the agreements that have been signed by the parties to the peace process, agreements that the international community has acknowledged and the co- sponsoring countries participated in reaching. President Mubarak also stressed that a fair peace is the natural approach to achieving security and stability in the countries of the region, stressing that this can only be achieved if [Israel] commits itself to the land-for-peace principle. He noted the importance of maintaining the momentum to advance the peace process and to preempt the forces that work to frustrate the peace process.

Al-Sharif said that President Mubarak answered questions and quarries by members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the International Relations Committee at the House of Representatives. President Mubarak pointed out that the establishment of a fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East will preempt terrorists not only in the Middle East but on the international level.

Al-Sharif added that President Mubarak stressed that peace is the cornerstone for confronting all forms of terrorism. Mubarak noted that if we focus our attention on achieving security first, we will limit ourselves to a small circle of terrorism and resisting it, which requires endless efforts. He added that focusing on a larger and more comprehensive circle—exerting efforts to achieve a comprehensive and fair peace—will result in achieving security for all parties and all countries and

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peoples of the region will stand up to terrorism under whatever name it falls.

Al-Sharif noted that at these meetings President Mubarak said that the path to achieving peace has never been a bed of roses, but that it requires men who have the courage to make decisions. President Mubarak also stressed that peace deserves making every sacrifice and showing courage to embrace it, whatever the cost.

In response to the Congressmen's questions, President Mubarak stressed that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's support is of vital necessity, in view of the fact that he is the Palestinian leader capable of making decisions and will do all he can without hesitation. He noted that 'Arafat is facing difficulties as a result of the failure to make progress in implementing the agreements signed with the Israeli party, something that places him in a difficult position.

Al-Sharif said that in response to a question on the way the Egyptian papers are handling relations with Israel, President Mubarak stressed that the press in Egypt is free and that no one interferes in its affairs, just like the press in the United States. President Mubarak said the press is the press whether in Egypt, the United States, or Israel. He said that our regime, which is based on democracy, will not interfere in press affairs. President Mubarak pointed out that the Egyptian papers severely criticize Egyptian policies within the framework of freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by the Constitution and the law, noting that any democratic regime can only respect the Constitution and the law.

Al-Sharif noted that in response to a question on his views on achieving progress on the Syrian-Israeli track, President Mubarak reasserted that activating the Syrian track requires first creating an atmosphere of mutual trust based on clear vision, particularly regarding the return of the occupied Syrian territory, because Syria will not sign for peace without recovering all its territory. President Mubarak said: "Achieving tangible and positive progress on the Palestinian track will help create an atmosphere of confidence for the Syrians."

Asked for his views regarding an international position to confront terrorism, President Mubarak stressed that for approximately ten years he has called for international cooperation and coordination, noting that his call was made early during the rise of the phenomenon of terrorism. He said that some people thought that his call was motivated by Egyptian interests. He said that he expected terrorism to become an international phenomenon and that keeping silent about it will only make its confrontation more difficult. He said: As an international community, we still have an opportunity to act, noting that the first step toward this goal should be achieving a fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, along with cooperation by the international community in confronting this phenomenon. He said that the international community should agree on several principles to prevent sheltering, financing, and training terrorists.

On the recent Arab summit in Cairo, President Mubarak said that the goal was to close Arabs ranks, bring views closer, and achieve an Arab agreement on the peace strategy, noting that the goal of holding the summit was peace and clearing the Arab air so that good relations may prevail in the Arab nation. Al-Sharif noted that President Mubarak clarified that the goal of holding the summit has been achieved, ensuring an Arab consensus on a comprehensive and fair peace and respecting what the international community and its establishments have acknowledged. President Mubarak stressed that the call for the summit was not a reaction or directed against anyone, but was to close the Arab ranks and clear the Arab air. He said that for the first time an Arab summit made a decision representing the Arab nation's will to achieve a fair and comprehensive peace in the region.

Egypt: Radio Comments on Mubarak's 'Successful' Visit, Talks

NC3107153396 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Commentary by Hasan al-'Ashmawi: "The Egyptian Leadership Succeeds in Affirming U.S. Backing For a Just and Comprehensive Peace in the Region"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is Egypt's destiny to always interact with the developments facing the Arab nation and to take upon itself the responsibility of settling the problems that this nation experiences, and which may affect Egypt or the entire Middle East. The main problem that the Arabs face, and have been facing for some time, is the lack of peace in the region and the need to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict satisfactorily, so that regional peoples may enjoy security and prosperity.

From this premise, the Egyptian leadership has taken it upon itself to work day and night to attain this sublime goal, out of its belief that under peace everybody will prosper. This is what made U.S. President Bill Clinton, in his joint press conference with President Mubarak, praise the wise and courageous leadership of President Husni Mubarak. This leadership enabled Egypt to play an instrumental role, along with the United States, in achieving peace and security in the Middle East and the world. He affirmed that this Egyptian role was the basis of the progress made in the region.

The progress achieved in the peace process, thanks to the Egyptian role, is behind the presence of President

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Mubarak in Washington. He is there to continue his efforts to give momentum to the peace process, for he believes that the suspension of the peace process will result in adverse repercussions for the region and the world. Following their successful and fruitful talks at the White House, Presidents Mubarak and Clinton reiterated their determination to continue their efforts to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region, the need for Israel to comply with the agreements concluded, the need to resume the peace process, and to make progress on the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks.

The Egyptian-U.S. emphasis on the need to comply with the Madrid conference formula, which is based on Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 425 and the land for peace principle; as well as the continued U.S. backing for the peace process without change, make President Mubarak's trip and talks in Washington a great success and strengthens the Egyptian stance, which seeks a just peace. This success, we believe, is because the Egyptian leadership has managed to persuade the U.S. leadership that the suspension of the peace process and the failure to resume it on the rules agreed upon regionally and internationally will disappoint the peoples in the region. This may prompt some groups to seize the opportunity to kindle the flames of terrorism and create unrest and chaos in the region, thus freezing the peace process. Hence lies the danger, because in such a case it would be hard to differentiate between perpetrators of these terrorist actions and their peoples.

President Mubarak has successfully managed to convince the U.S. President that the continuation of the status quo in the peace process along the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese tracks will endanger the peace process. President Clinton was clear when he affirmed that the United States will continue to play its role in the peace process and that there is no change in its policy despite the recent Israeli elections.

President Mubarak's success in persuading President Clinton to say once again that the U.S. backs the land-for-peace principle is a point added to his score, particularly in the wake of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Washington. It was the prevailing belief then that the Clinton Administration tended to appease Netanyahu in view of the U.S. presidential elections. However, President Clinton's remarks in his news conference with President Mubarak show that the U.S. Administration is still committed to the foundations of the peace process agreed upon in Madrid and that it will continue its efforts to persuade Netanyahu's Israel of this.

Accordingly, it could be said that the United States is now required to continue its efforts to revive the peace process on all tracks. This is because it has many cards that it can use to pressure Israel to accept the principles agreed upon by the international community to make peace in the region. First among these cards is the U.S. aid to Israel and the U.S. strategic interest in the region, which also require a balanced security and peace to remain free from threat. There is hope that the goals of President Mubarak's visit to Washington will materialize in the near future, so that peace and stability may prevail in the region and its peoples may live in prosperity.

Egypt: Papers View Summit Talks, U.S.-Egyptian Relations

NC3107082896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0505 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 31 Jul (MENA)—Today's Cairo newspapers continue to comment on President Husni Mubarak's current visit to the United States and his talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton and congressional leaders. They say the visit and talks are a warning to the world and the main partners in the peace process that there is a need to exert greater and urgent efforts to resume the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

AL-AHRAM warns in its editorial of the danger of the continuing stagnation in the peace process. It says that such a situation will revive feelings of hostility and suspicion among large sectors of the region's peoples, especially those directly harmed by this stagnation, such as the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese peoples. It adds: The bitterness of these three and other Arab peoples is increasing because of the loss of many opportunities to achieve economic progress. The Middle East peoples are under the yoke of aggression, doubts, and fears while other nations are making progress and many achievements. It stresses that President Mubarak's redoubled efforts during this visit aim to remove the clouds of stagnation and differences caused by the new Israeli Government and its policy, which appears to be extreme and arrogant and has created many problems in the region.

AL-JUMHURIYAH writes: If the Mubarak-Clinton summit regards saving the peace process as its main objective, then the strong friendship between Mubarak, chairman of the Arab summit, and Clinton, the president of the most powerful country, opens the door for consultations on important issues, such as benefiting from the sound Egyptian view on combating terrorism. It adds: On the basis of this firm relationship and the boundless faith in the pivotal issue of peace, the peace supporters have the right to be optimistic about the

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Mubarak-Clinton summit, which will put peace on the right track after Mubarak explains the Arab stand to his friend Clinton. It then notes that observers believe the Mubarak-Clinton summit marks the start of a new stage that will remove the peace process from the recent deadlock caused by recent events in the region.

AL-AKHBAR comments in its editorial on relations between Egypt and the United States in view of the positive effects this relationship has on Egypt and the Egyptian people. It calls on the United States to realize that there are many political, economic, cultural, and other reasons for making it maintain this relationship and that Egypt is the leading country in the Arab world and the key to peace and stability in the Middle East.

It adds: With its expertise, acumen, history, and knowledge of all the routes of the Middle East peace process, Egypt realizes that the U.S. Administration will be making a grave mistake if it believes the Israeli prime minister's claims that Israel can protect the region's security and stability alone, because the facts and events prove that there can be neither security nor stability without a comprehensive peace on every front. It adds: Egypt's sincerity, clarity, and frankness are behind this unprecedented interest in its president's meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Egypt: Papers 'Unanimous' on Good Results of Trip

NC0108091596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0520 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Aug (MENA)—Cairo newspapers today are unanimous that President Husni Mubarak's talks in Washington with U.S. President Bill Clinton, Vice President Al Gore, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, other senior U.S. Administration officials, and Congressional leaders have yielded extremely positive results. These results, the newspapers add, will enhance Egyptian-U.S. understanding on the efforts aimed at establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The papers refer to President Mubarak's announcement that he expects progress to be made soon in peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

The newspapers are also unanimous that the visit produced positive results as regards promoting bilateral economic and trade cooperation to a point where Egyptian-U.S. trade ties will be upgraded to a level of unique ties following the example of the special trade ties between the United States and both Turkey and Israel.

In their headlines and on their front pages, the newspapers highlight the U.S. sources' and newspapers' assessment of the visit. They focus on these sources' statement that the most important outcome of President Mubarak's talks in Washington is the enhancing of Egypt's regional role and refocusing on the need to pursue the Middle East peace process, which faltered especially after the recent Israeli elections.

Jalal Duwaydar, AL-AKHBAR's chief editor who is covering the visit, writes an article headlined "On the Right Track Politically and Economically." He says that what draws attention most in President Mubarak's talks is self-pride and full awareness of Egypt's standing, key role, and views on achieving peace, security, and stability in the Middle East.

He adds that this was evident at the joint news conference held at the White House after a session of talks with President Clinton when a U.S. correspondent asked him if he was concerned by the talk about new conditions for U.S. foreign aid from which Egypt gets about $2 billion and whether he took into consideration Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's announcement on his readiness to accept a reduction of aid allocated to Israel.

The writer notes that as usual President Mubarak's reply was quick, spontaneous, and strong, which aroused admiration from all the U.S. and other correspondents. The president said: We realize that this aid will not last forever. Therefore, we are ready and prepared at any time for it to be cut or reduced and we have no concern about it. President Mubarak added: There is good cooperation with the United States and we are not worried at all about severing the aid. As for Netanyahu's call for cutting or reducing the aid to Israel, this is a matter concerning him and Israel and we have no objection to that.

The writer remarks that the whole audience laughed, admiring this answer, which came in response to a Jewish correspondent's question as part of attempts to cause trouble and spoil Egyptian-U.S. ties.

The writer concludes his article by saying: The talk I heard in Washington from politicians and U.S. and Egyptian businessmen confirms the healthy relationship between Egypt and the United States based on frankness, respect, appreciation, and equal mutual interests. This natural picture, far removed from falsity and appearances, shows that we are treading on the right path politically and economically to serve our national and pan-Arab goals.

In its editorial, headlined "Mubarak's Visit to Washington Achieves Full Success," the AL-AKHBAR newspaper says President Husni Mubarak's visit to the United States has succeeded politically and economically and on the media level.

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As regards the political aspect concerning the Middle East peace process, the paper says, the visit has achieved a noticeable success. This, it adds, was achieved through the assertion of Egypt's view on the need to act swiftly to resume the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations and linking the continuation of this stagnant status quo and creating a fertile land for breeding terrorism, which has inarguably become an international issue.

The paper says the success was also achieved by explaining Egypt's view which always emphasizes that the land-for-peace formula is the basis of negotiations, not a new condition. The paper notes that President Mubarak's visit to Washington did not aim to make decisions in this respect as much as it sought to lay down bases for a joint Egyptian-U.S. move to push the peace process forward. Mubarak, it continues, managed to concentrate on all the Egyptian and Arab constants in this regard. It was evident from remarks made by various U.S. officials that there was a clear understanding of these stands. The outcome of this Egyptian move will definitely appear in the coming phase, the paper notes.

It believes that most of the economic objectives have been achieved and that the evidence is the statements made by U.S. Secretary of Trade Michael Kantor. Kantor emphasized that the U.S. Administration will encourage U.S. businessmen to participate in the economic summit and investment in Egypt. He also noted ways to promote U.S. investments in Egypt through its projects there.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says the great media success of this visit was apparent in the interest shown by various print, audio, and visual media worldwide in all the details of the visit. This interest, the paper adds, reflected the influence of Egypt and its leader Husni Mubarak on the world political stage.

In his weekly column AL-JUMHURIYAH chief editor Mahfuz al-Ansari writes under the headline "Mubarak in the United States, Expectations and Facts": We must remember that Mubarak's visit to Washington followed U.S. President Bill Clinton's insistent and express wish. It was not an Egyptian initiative.

Al-Ansari points out that Clinton first extended his invitation at the beginning of June and wanted the visit to take place specifically on 5 June but President Mubarak begged off and asked for a postponement because of numerous previous engagements. The U.S. President repeated the invitation and insisted on it and President Mubarak accepted it after he finished his earlier commitments.

Al-Ansari adds: This means that Egypt had no urgent interest nor any special request of the United States. Perhaps the United States had an interest and a request of Egypt and of President Mubarak specifically. President Clinton is only a few months away from the Presidential election and needs backing to prove to the U.S. people that their "investment" in a Middle East peace has not been wasted and that the peace process has not collapsed with the fall of Shim'on Peres and the coming of Binyamin Netanyahu. The president of the largest Arab country, a country that played a pioneering peace role, still shares the U.S. President's belief and confidence that the process will continue through practical Egyptian-U.S. coordination capable of rescuing the operation and attaining peace.

Samir Rajab, AL-JUMHURIYAH's chairman of the board of directors, asserts that Mubarak's visit had positive political and economic results.

In an article published today, Rajab remarks that the United States and the U.S. public are fully convinced that Egypt plays an unquestionably major regional and international role.

He adds: When the official dialogue between President Husni Mubarak and U.S. President Bill Clinton began, the facts became clear. The Scud missile issue did not occupy a significant part of the discussions and was only mentioned peripherally especially when it became clear that the earlier reports about this issue had not been sufficiently accurate.

Rajab says: As for the U.S. position on Middle East peace, President Clinton made this clear in the first few minutes of his meeting with President Mubarak. Both stressed that the land-for- peace principle will not change and that the agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority must be implemented. They also emphasized the necessity of resuming the negotiations between Israel and the Arab countries and the need to achieve progress on the Palestinian track. They declared that talks between Israel and Syria and Lebanon are basic and unretractable components of the peace operation.

Samir Rajab notes that the United States believes that Egypt is the source of strength, security, and leadership in the region and that Cairo's leading role in restoring Arab solidarity and its efforts to rally Arab ranks is not a source of worry for the Americans.

The newspaper AL-AHRAM devotes its editorial to Presidents Mubarak and Clinton's emphasis on the need to develop a global cooperation to combat terrorism and reduce its serious and negative effects. The paper notes

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that Mubarak's visit to Washington followed two terrorist acts carried out against the United States, namely, the U.S. airliner's incident and the Olympic games attack. AL-AHRAM notes that these two incidents imposed themselves on the agenda of the Egyptian-U.S. summit.

The paper voices the belief that although the motives for terrorism in the United States are different from those in the Middle East and other regions, all terrorist acts serve the purposes of shortsighted groups who seek to impose their wishes on the population at large after failing to merge in the legal democratic makeup of civilized societies or to attract the masses to their devilish objectives.

The paper highlights President Mubarak's repeated declarations that terrorism has become an international phenomenon, is not restricted to one single region, and has transborder organizations.

AL-AHRAM remarks that terrorism is no longer linked to any particular ideology nor even to logic but has become an insane phenomenon that showers its curses on innocent victims. For this reason it is imperative to forge a broader level of coordination to reduce the threat that these organizations pose.

In conclusion AL-AHRAM says: President Mubarak clearly stated that helping Egypt to enhance its ability to combat terrorism actually improves the whole world's ability in this respect. It is not enough to hold conferences about terrorism but to send a message to countries that sponsor terrorism to make them understand that terrorism is a two-edged weapon that will cut off their hands before it hurts others.

Egypt: More on Projects Agreed Yo During Economic Talks With Libya

MM3107115396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Jul 96 p 9

[Report by Jabir al-Qarmuti in Cairo: "Egypt and Libya Agree To Carry Out Projects and on Idea of Setting Up Joint Commercial Bank"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The meetings of the joint Egyptian-Libyan Economic Committee, held over four days under the chairmanship of 'Isam Farraj, under secretary at the Egyptian Economy Ministry and head of the Commercial Representation Organ, and 'Ali al-Usta, director general of foreign trade at the Secretariat of the Libyan People's Committee for Trade [trade ministry], and with the participation of 20 businessmen from both sides, ended yesterday.

A source at the Economy Ministry told AL-HAYAH that the two sides have agreed to set up a customs checkpoint on the borders between the two countries, unify the certification fees on commercial documents, and reopen the two Egyptian commercial centers in Tripoli and Banghazi. They also agreed to examine the idea of setting up a joint commercial bank to take care of commercial transactions between the two countries and facilitate transit trade procedures and, in line with the ratified customs agreement, agreed that locally manufactured goods in both countries would be exempt [of duty].

The committee also examined setting up technical committees with a view to unifying the specifications and the rules for verifying the origin of both countries' exports and boosting the role of the joint trade group and trade exchanges, which have recently reached $122 million.

Meanwhile, sources at the Economy Ministry said that despite the U.S. (D'Amato) law calling for sanctions on foreign companies which have dealings with either Libya or Iran, there is nevertheless the intention to boost cooperation between the two countries, particularly in the investment field. The Libyan Arab Company for Foreign Investment intends to carry out several projects in Egypt in the near future, at a cost of 3 billion Egyptian pounds ($590 million). These projects concern mainly the acquisition of public sector assets which will be privatized.

It has been decided that a group of Egyptian businessmen will leave for Libya soon to start implementing the projects agreed by both sides during Libyan Leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi's visit to Cairo late last May.

The projects include putting the unused capacity of the Libyan iron and steel factory to good use, setting up a joint contracting company with $29.4 million capital shared between Egyptian and Libyan businessmen, and which would carry out its activities at home and abroad, and also a series of joint factories in the food industry field to satisfy the needs of the Libyan people for food products and the setting up of investment holding companies, including a holding company for engineering industries. Some of this company's shares will be on offer to the public, and its task will be to achieve self-sufficiency in producing components that Egypt or Libya imports.

It is currently intended to set up a joint holding company for food products. The two sides also intend to carry out Libyan projects in Egypt such as building tourist hotels, in return for setting up a series of Egyptian projects in Libya for manufacturing clothes, ceramics, cement, and cars.

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Egypt: 'Amr Musa Tells AL-MAJALLAH 'Economic Conference' Goes Ahead

MM3107132496 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 28 Jul-3 Aug 96 p 40

[Report by Muhammad Mutawwali Fadl: "Egyptian Foreign Minister Tells AL-MAJALLAH: Netanyahu Not Affecting Egyptian Economy, 'Economic Conference' Will Be Held in November"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — [passage omitted] Al-MAJALLAH asked [Egyptian Foreign Minister] 'Amr Musa about the possibility that the economic conference scheduled to be held in Cairo 12-14 November to reinforce regional economic ties could be postponed or canceled because of Netanyahu's assumption of power. The Egyptian minister said that Netanyahu's assumption of power has no effect and that Israel has no effect on the economic situation, neither before nor after the elections.

'Amr Musa added: "With regard to the scheduled conference, it has a completely different framework, because it will be talking about regional cooperation, and it is not conditional on Israel being the common denominator in it. And we have not said that economic cooperation revolves around Israel. Regional cooperation is cooperation among numerous states in the Middle East. Israel is just one of these states."

Then 'Amr Musa spoke of the Arabs' annoyance at Netanyahu's statements and how these statements have affected the investment climate in the Middle East, saying that the current situation in the region is arousing annoyance and concern, and that this will not change unless matters move in their normal direction and the Israeli Government complies with the international resolutions.

Asked whether he was optimistic about Israel's response, he said: "By God, I cannot say that I am optimistic or pessimistic. But so far there are no indications to inspire optimism."

Egypt: 'Perpetrators' of Europa Hotel Incident Arrested

NC3107161496 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 26 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi stated that the security forces have recently arrested the perpetrators of the Europa Hotel incident [in which 18 Greek tourists were killed on 18 April 1996]. More details will be announced in the next few days.

Al-Alfi said two perpetrators were arrested alive, while two others were killed in an exchange of fire with the security forces.

Al-Alfi was speaking to journalists during the prime minister's visit to al-Mansurah.

Egypt: 'Sharp' Power Struggle Reported Within Labor Party

NC3107144796 Cairo SABAH AL-KHAYR in Arabic 25 Jul 96 pp 4,5

[Report by Rida Hammad]

[FBIS Translated Text] A sharp struggle for power is going on within the Labor Party between Ibrahim Shukri and his supporters on one hand, and 'Adil Husayn and Majdi Husayn on the other. The remain reason is Ibrahim Shukri's objection to the Majdi Husayn's legal problems with 'Ala' al-Alfi, the interior minister's son. Shukri believes this is a futile confrontation that will eventually sever all the party's ties with the government. In a bid to persuade Majdi and 'Adil Husayn to change their stand, Shukri has been holding daily meetings with them, but to no avail.

Meanwhile, 'Adil Husayn has revived the proposal, which he aired during the recent party congress, calling on Shukri down to step down as party leader. In his proposal, 'Adil Husayn called for the election of Shukri as honorary president for life and for the appointment of Dr. Muhammad Hilmi Murad as actual party leader. He, 'Adil Husayn, would retain his post as secretary general. Because this proposal faced strong opposition from Shukri's supporters at the recent congress, 'Adil Husayn is showing it cautiously this time with a view to gaining the support of some party members. In return, Shukri is playing another card, threatening to return party dissident Ahmad Mujahid to the party's ranks. Shukri recently leaked the news of a meeting between the two, realizing that the return of Mujahid to the party ranks would be a severe blow to 'Adil Husayn and his supporters.

Libya

Libya: 'Islamic Martyrs' Group Claims Killing of Banghazi Official

MM3107142596 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 31 Jul 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Libyan Security Official Killed in Islamic Opposition Attack in Banghazi"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — The Libyan Islamic Martyrs Movement [harakat al-shuhada' al-islamiyah] yesterday announced that it killed a Libyan official in Banghazi the day before yesterday [29 July].

A spokesman for the movement in London told AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI over the telephone that a group

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from the Islamic Martyrs Movement killed Rajab Hunaysh, member of the Revolutionary Committees in Libya, in retaliation for the murder of three young Islamists near the city of Darnah. Libya had announced the killing of the three in a battle it said was aimed at pursuing drug smugglers.

The speaker held Hunaysh responsible for pursuing Islamic oppositionists in Libya, accusing him of removing the hijabs [headdresses] of scores of women in Libya by force.

The speaker denied official Libyan reports of the murder of Muhammad al-Hami, the movement's amir [leader], saying that al-Hami is still alive.

He stressed that the movement he was speaking for is an independent organization and has no links with the Muslim Brotherhood, the Afghan Arabs, or any Libyan opposition organization abroad. And that it is responsible for most of the operations carried out against the regime inside the country, and has lost many [of its members] in the confrontations.

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Kuwait

Kuwait: Officials Meets With Visiting U.S. Defense Secretary

LD3107184396 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His highness the amir received U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and the delegation accompanying him at 1400 at Dasman Palace on the occasion of their visit to the country. The meeting was attended by His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah Al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister; Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Shaykh Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad al- Sabah, minister of Amiri Court Affairs; Shaykh Ahmad al-Hamud al-Jabir al-Sabah, defense minister; 'Abd-al-'Aziz Dakhil al-Dakhil, minister of state for cabinet affairs and planning minister; Lieutenant General 'Ali Mu'min, chief of the Army General Staff; and the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait.

Kuwait: Perry—U.S. Continues Military Support

LD3107191896 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry has paid a brief visit to Kuwait during which he held talks with senior officials on ways to reinforce military cooperation between the two countries. In an interview with the Kuwaiti television, the U.S. defense secretary said that Iraq still poses a threat to the security of Kuwait and the region. He added that his visit to Kuwait is aimed at reaffirming the United States' commitment to the security of Kuwait and the region.

The U.S. defense secretary said that his talks in the country today dealt with the threats facing Kuwait and the U.S. troops from Iraq. He added that Iraq remains dangerous despite the cut it was forced to make in its military capabilities. He said in this respect that Iraq still has hostile intentions. Perry added that the talks also covered the measures which the two countries could take together to confront these threats.

On the future of the agreement on military cooperation signed between Kuwait and the United States, the U.S. defense secretary said that the United States will continue to support Kuwait militarily. He talked about the strength of military cooperation between the armed forces in the two countries.

Perry indicated that there will be cooperation between the Kuwaiti and U.S. sides in the reinforcement of the protection measures for the U.S. troops stationed on Kuwaiti territory. He added that the U.S. troops in Kuwait enjoy good protection and that there is no need to move them to other locations.

Perry also said that some U.S. troops in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are close to urban areas which makes it, he added, difficult to provide protection for them. He said that he agreed with officials in the Saudi government yesterday to move these troops to other locations to facilitate their protection.

In a reference to al-Khubar explosion, he said that the Saudi government is working in collaboration with the FBI to arrest the perpetrators of that act in order to punish them.

Kuwait To Intensify Efforts To Make Iraq Release Prisoners

LD3107184096 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has called on the international community to continue putting effective pressure on the Iraqi regime to force it to abide fully by all the Security Council resolutions linked to its invasion of the State of Kuwait.

In a statement he made to KUNA on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the criminal Iraqi invasion, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad stressed the need to force the Iraqi regime to implement these resolutions, foremost the one on the immediate and unconditional release of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees held in Iraqi jails.'

The first deputy prime minister and foreign minister said that the State of Kuwait will intensify its efforts, officially and informally, with the various international institutions and organizations concerned with human rights to ask for continued international pressure to speed up the release of the prisoners and detainees and put an end to this human suffering. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: Prince Sultan Tells Perry—Residents' Security Guaranteed

MM3107124196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by 'Abdallah Nasir al-Shahri: "Prince Sultan Informed Perry of Ability To Guarantee Security of Every Resident in Saudi Arabia"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh — Reliable sources told AL-HAYAH yesterday that Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Saudi second deputy prime minister and defense and aviation minister, told his U.S. opposite

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number, William Perry, that "Saudi security services are capable of guaranteeing the security of every citizen and resident on the Kingdom's territory."

He stressed that "the security incidents experienced by some states in the region recently are nothing compared with what is happening in several regions and in more developed states that have bigger security reinforcements."

Prince Sultan stressed his country's care for the region's stability and security. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Prince Sultan, Perry Release Joint Communique After Talks

LD3107131796 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1130 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the visit of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the following joint press communique has been released:

His Excellency the U.S. Defense Secretary paid a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 30 July to 31 July, during which he met His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector-general. During the meeting, major developments on the international level were discussed.

In a spirit of cooperation and continuous friendship, His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector-general of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and his excellency US Defense Secretary William Perry ended discussions on a joint strategy to reinforce security measures for the protection of friendly American forces based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The two sides also stressed the determination of the two countries to fight terrorism and work together for peace and stability in the region, and their support for Security Council resolutions in the United Nations.

The two sides agreed to move the friendly forces to new locations in Saudi facilities at a time when these forces were still carrying out their missions.

His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz stressed Saudi Arabia's support for these measures and both sides agreed that these matters should be dealt with immediately, and, at the same time, that these measures reinforce the security of the friendly forces, without having any consequence on the capability of these forces to accomplish their missions.

Saudi Arabia: Crown Prince Holds Talks With PLO's al-Husayni

LD3107193696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1220 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jeddah, 31 Jul — His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, received in his office at al-Salam Palace this afternoon Faysal al-Husayni, PLO Executive Committee member in charge of Jerusalem affairs.

The meeting was attended by Mustafa Hashim al-Shaykh Dib, ambassador of the State of Palestine to the kingdom.

Saudi Arabia: Dissidents Say 'Number of Bombs' Defused Around Riyadh

MS3107090696 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 31 Jul 96 p 11

[Report by Christopher Lockwood: "Saudis Face Call For Cash To Protect U.S. Forces"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] William Perry, the U.S. Defence Secretary, flew to Saudi Arabia yesterday to demand expensive security improvements for the 6,000 U.S. troops stationed in the kingdom, following last month's bomb which killed 19 American servicemen.

He is due to meet both the ailing King Fahd and his supposed successor, Crown Prince 'Abdallah.

The visit comes amid growing fears about the stability of the Saudi regime in the wake of the Dhahran bomb, doubts about the Saudi royal succession and a persistently weak economy.

Mr Perry is expected to insist at least 4,000 of the U.S. soldiers and airmen based in Saudi Arabia be moved from the busy city of Dhahran, where the bomb exploded on June 25, to an air base at al-Kharj, an isolated site south of the capital, Riyadh.

Bombers, not yet identified, drove to within 100 yards of American residential buildings before exploding their massive device.

It emerged that Saudi authorities had earlier blocked American requests for an enhanced cordon on grounds of cost.

But, although al-Kharj is far more secure than the facilities at King 'Abd-al-'Aziz air base, Dhahran, it will still need extensive modifications, including the construction of an expensive security cordon to keep outsiders well back from the areas where Americans live and work.

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One tricky question is who will pay. The Saudi government is known to be cash strapped, having been badly hurt by the collapse in world oil prices and the consequent increase in unemployment.

One estimate says real national income has fallen from 10,000 pounds per head in 1982 to under 2,500 pounds.

A possible solution, observers say, is that the government of Kuwait might be persuaded to contribute, since the American troops are largely in Saudi Arabia as a defence against a possible southward strike by President Saddam Husayn's forces towards Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait's Crown Prince was also in Jeddah yesterday, visiting King Fahd. Kuwaiti officials insisted that this was only a coincidence.

Observers believe a reason for Saudi reluctance to accept the American proposals for security improvements is that this could send a signal that Washington believes the government's control is breaking down.

Saudi dissidents in Britain report that in the last week a number of bombs have been defused at key locations in and around Riyadh, including one at the foreign airlines' terminal at King Khaled airport, one at the King Faysal air base (used by the Americans) and one near a palace belonging to Prince Sultan, the defence minister.

The British embassy in Riyadh and the Saudi embassy in London have said they know nothing about the alleged bombs. But British officials disclosed that there had been a number of security scares since last month's explosion.

Areas have been evacuated but no devices found, they said.

Earlier this month, the White House authorised the withdrawal of the families of U.S. government servants from Saudi Arabia, a move normally undertaken only in national income has fallen unusually tense situations.

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Iraq: Al-Samarra'i Assesses Saddam's Position

MM3107151696 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 28 Jul-3 Aug 96 pp 30-31

[Interview with Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, by Ghalib Darwish in London; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Darwish] [UN Special Commission chief] Ekeus has stated that Iraq is still concealing a number of surface-to-surface missiles. According to published reports, Iraq has been concealing these missiles aboard vehicles which are in constant movement. What is the number of missiles Saddam is concealing and what danger do they hold for the situation in the region?

[Al-Samarra'i] I have no doubt about the credibility of the UN Special Commission on the elimination of mass destruction weapons in Iraq [UNSCOM]. However, I believe that they have been wrong in their estimates of the number of missiles still in the hands of the Iraqi regime (between 6 and 16). I reckon Saddam might hand over this limited number of missiles while keeping another 40 missiles in his arsenal.

As to the manner of concealing these missiles, it is not all that complex. Iraq is a large and wide country and has many places where such weapons could be stored or concealed. For example, it could place the missiles in containers and bury them in the ground after removing the sensitive parts from them as it is not possible to scan the entire Iraqi territory for radioactivity by means of satellites.

These missiles have an added seriousness because many of them are equipped with germ warheads while others are equipped with chemical warheads. The number of missiles which were imported from the (former) USSR amounted to about 1,000 Scud R17 missiles. Furthermore, the range of these missiles was altered from 300 km to 600 km and they were renamed "Al-Husayn" and "Al-'Abbas" missiles. Later on these missiles began to be produced in Iraq, including their engines.

I believe that Iraq was one of the countries that obtained these missiles. This matter does not in itself constitute any strategic problem. But the fact that these missiles are in the hands of a dictator such as Saddam, who has disturbed the region's peace for many long years and who would not hesitate to do anything for the sake of realizing his illegitimate ambitions, bestows extreme gravity on them.

We in the Iraqi opposition are also interested in the activities of the UN commission for the elimination of mass destruction weapons, and we are perhaps more interested than most of the neighboring countries. This is because we want Iraq to be strong fairly and justly and to support its neighbors.

We can easily see the difference between the huge developments that have taken place in the Gulf countries following the rise in oil prices in 1973 and the backwardness that afflicts Iraq. The Gulf countries have developed in all fields of civilization and particularly in the field of the building and advancement of cities, while the Iraqi cities have become dismal ruins and our agriculture and industry have been reduced to a tragic state despite the enormous water wealth our country possesses.

Furthermore, we have been fettered by compensation payments that amount to one third of our oil revenue, with another third to be paid as interest for a long time to come. Iraq has spent billions of dollars on acquiring mass destruction weapons which it could not use even during its more critical moments. What does all this mean?

The Iraqi tragedy has yet another aspect: The UNSCOM decision will remain in force for a long time and might even extend to beyond the toppling of Saddam. It is not in our national interest to remain a defusing spot for international problems and conflicts.

During my visit to London, I was asked: Why do you not help expose the hiding places of the various weapons? My answer was clear, namely, that we want to link the unmasking of the mass-destruction weapons to the fall of Saddam. As to stripping Iraq of all weapons while Saddam remains in power, that would be a tragedy in which we will not participate whether we know where the weapons are being concealed or not. We want Iraq to remain a peaceful country and we want to take it out of the walls of international isolation and decimation.

[Darwish] What does Saddam aim to achieve by concealing these weapons, particularly in the light of what some say about the missiles' ability to carry germ warheads?

[Al-Samarra'i] Saddam's possession of a limited number of long- range missiles affirms his continued desire to possess biological weapons.

[Darwish] You lived through the Iraq-Iran war and held a senior military position at the time. Where did these missiles come from and would Iraq be capable of producing them without international monitoring?

[Al-Samarra'i] Yes, Iraq is capable of producing these missiles in the first prolonged absence of international observers.

[Darwish] What is the role of the Republican Guards, the Special Guards, and the Saddam Fedayeen forces

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in protecting the regime? What role could these three forces play in combating any military coup attempt?

[Al-Samarra'i] The Republican Guards and the Special Guards and even those called Saddam's Fedayeen are all sons of the Iraqi people and have no truly genuine connections with the regime. Some people believe that the officers and men are loyal to Saddam since they form part of the official establishment. But the facts point to the opposite. For example, Kadhim Kazar, the director of public security, was executed by Saddam. The same applies to Major General Fadil Al-Barak, the director of intelligence, and Staff Lieutenant General Thabit Sultan al-Tikriti. The chief of the Army General Staff, Staff General Nizar al-Khazraji, fled to Jordan. I was director of general military intelligence and I am now in the ranks of the opposition. There are many other examples I could cite.

Saddam was the subject of an assassination attempt toward the end of last month, June, and a number of Special Guards officers were arrested on the charge of conspiring to assassinate Saddam and topple the regime. The number arrested reached 130. This shows how weak the loyalty is to Saddam within the establishments that are close to him. Even some of his relatives have rebelled against him such as Sab'awi, Watban, and Barzan.

[Darwish] It is being reported that a secret conflict has been raging inside the Iraqi military establishment between the true military and the civilian generals, that is those whom Saddam has brought into the Army. How far do you think this conflict will go and what effect it will have on the regime's stability?

[Al-Samarra'i] It is a known fact that Saddam, 'Azzah al-Durri, and 'Ali Hasan al-Majid possess no military qualifications. This does not, however, pose a real problem compared to the catastrophes that have befallen Iraq. Any highwayman can don any military uniform he wants. But can he keep up this act of deception for ever?

[Darwish] Has the Iraqi opposition succeeded in penetrating the military positions that are close to Saddam?

[Al-Samarra'i] The positions close to Saddam have been penetrated. Not everyone holds allegiance to Saddam, as I have already said. It is possible for any Iraqi opposition to get to the closest point around Saddam.

[Darwish] There are some who bet on a presidential palace coup. What do you say to that?

[Al-Samarra'i] Classical military coups in their well-known forms have become archaic in both theory and method. They are difficult to stage and require a lot of time. As to the occurrence of a sudden change in the palace such as 'Udayy [Saddam's son] killing his father, that would be a bet which I cannot exclude.

We Iraqis know better than anyone else the best way to topple the regime. The broadcasting of the first proclamation about the fall of Saddam by a military command would make matters better. But it is difficult for such a thing to happen at the present time. We believe in a joint operation combining the Armed Forces and the opposition formations inside the country based on a realistic plan.

Some Western countries are wary about the toppling of Saddam for fear of an Iranian intervention or the sparking of a civil war. But I believe neither of these two probabilities is likely to take place. We have enough lessons and experience in this regard and can point to a number of factors in this respect:

1) All the Iraqi opposition forces are agreed that the toppling of Saddam is a national responsibility.

2) The extremist currents have come to realize that it would be impossible to set up a government in Baghdad by their own methods and that it is impossible to change the required regional formulas [for setting up a government].

3) Iran amassed 15 military divisions and staged military maneuvers on the borders with Iraq during the popular uprising, but it was forced to retreat following the West's warning to it. Perhaps Iran has taken that warning to mean that a premeditated military blow would be dealt to it if it were to try to intervene.

There is no justification for fearing a flare-up of civil war inside Iraq. The Iraqis have never fought against each other throughout their history. If some excesses were to happen, and such excesses are likely, they can be easily overcome. A million Iraqis were killed in violent wars.

As to the fears of intervention by the Army to defend Saddam, that too is unlikely, particularly after the Army has lost its readiness to defend a regime that has destroyed it and paralyzed its military capabilities. Furthermore, reports have been appearing in the press about rifts within the ranks of the Special Guards and the Republican Guards and the defection and flight of big personalities and about the assassination attempt staged against Saddam by the Special Guards recently.

[Darwish] The flight of Iraqi military men into exile has aroused many questions concerning this phenomenon particularly as some believe that the flight of the real military into exile will help to deflate the only force capable of bringing about change. What do you think yourself?

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[Al-Samarra'i] No military man wants to leave Iraq, unless he is facing an imminent threat as is the case in my situation, or unless his departure is part of a coordinated move in conjunction with others abroad. The presence of the military commanders inside Iraq is very important and the presence of some of them as symbols of the national opposition against Saddam is even more important. But I believe that the conditions and resources might not help them to stay for long.

[Darwish] The Iraqi military were relied upon to embark on an action in the field, but so far they have not succeeded in organizing themselves, have they?

[Al-Samarra'i] Had there been the necessary resources, a great deal would have happened. But resources are limited and Saddam's continued presence in power threatens regional security, and hence the action of the military will need some sort of support.

[Darwish] Do you think that Iraq still maintains relations with the Western companies that played a role in providing it with biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons? To what extent can Saddam restore these relation?

[Al-Samarra'i] The relations with the Western companies are essentially there. When the funds become available, the regime will resume its contacts with these companies. What is important is that Saddam has discovered the road that could enable him to get what he wants.

[Darwish] Some attribute the al-Khubar explosion in the eastern region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Iraqi regime. Did you feel when you were inside Iraq that there were sabotage plans being prepared by Saddam against the Gulf countries?

[Al-Samarra'i] Perhaps. What prompts us to level such a charge is our familiarity with the philosophy and mentality of the regime. We have often pointed out that the war which would break out in the region in the case of the lifting of sanctions on Saddam would be particularly a security one. Saddam will use the security machinery, the four intelligence apparatuses, and the oil revenue to destabilize the peace and security of the Gulf countries. Furthermore, spying, information and psychological warfare, material sabotage, the creation of problems, the division of ranks, acts of terrorism, and the creation of sham opposition bodies from these countries are all objectives that are not unconnected with the regime's policy.

[Darwish] Some feel that the UN machinery for uncovering the Iraqi weapons has been very slow and useless due to Saddam's ability to maneuver and conceal dangerous weapons which the international monitoring apparatuses have failed to keep up with.

[Al-Samarra'i] No, it is not slow but its resources are limited.

[Darwish] How do you evaluate the balance of strategic powers in the region in the absence of Iraq, and its effect on peace in the Middle East?

[Al-Samarra'i] Iraq has a great strategic and regional weight, a proven ability to endure, and vast resources. Furthermore, Iraq is the pivot of regional security and Saddam's continued stay in power means the continued hindrance of this role in the region. There are some who believe that Saddam's continuation in authority is essential for facing up to Iran. I believe that this analysis is not correct. Iraq surpassed Iran militarily by a large margin. If Iraq is required (with Saddam's continuation) to stand up to Iran, then it must be rearmed. And this is impossible because Saddam will turn his attention toward the Gulf again.

[Darwish] Are any Syrian-Iraqi meetings taking place?

[Al-Samarra'i] No. There are no Syrian-Iraqi meetings. Syria, the country which has supported us, still enjoys deep respect from all. We are still coordinating with its leadership on matters pertaining to the most important Iraqi future issues.

[Darwish] How do you evaluate the West's position on the toppling of Saddam?

[Al-Samarra'i] We are convinced that the West does not want to coexist with Saddam. Iraq's economic importance due to its possession of oil will be one of the reason that make the Westerners consider dealing with this country on the basis of common interests. We are anxious to manage our resources economically in the interest of Iraq.

[Darwish] How do you view [UN] Resolution 986? Is it true that Saddam has come out of the critical phase?

[Al-Samarra'i] We do not support any resolution that aims at easing the economic and political pressures on Saddam. We support all measures that would help to ease the suffering of our people in Iraq. Saddam has entered a critical phase after having made even the quarters closest to him fed up with him. The mutiny of the Special Guards and the movements within the ranks of the Republican Guards provide further proofs of the squeeze on Saddam's authority. The continuation of the economic sanctions is important for several reasons:

1) It provides proof that the international community is determined to isolate Saddam.

2) Saddam's security and continuation depend on financial resources and incentives, since without them his influence will wane locally and regionally.

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3) The international sanctions have helped to curb Saddam's terrorist ambitions outside Iraq.

4) The sanctions have created favorable climates for the opposition to expose the regime's crimes and the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Reports Regime Attack in Marshlands

JN3107133096 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Every now and then, Saddam's cowardly regime, which is isolating itself in Baghdad, tries to conceal its defeats in the face of our valiant mujahidin by launching attacks against innocent civilians in the marshlands in the south and in the nearby areas.

We have just received a report from al-Nasiriyah Governorate that says that the agent regime massed forces comprising elements from the intelligence service and the Special Security Agency, members of the mischievous party, and bands from the gangster Saddam Fedayeen organization. The forces launched a treacherous and cowardly attack against the innocent civilians on the outskirts of al-Nasiriyah Governorate.

In response to this flagrant and cowardly attack, the heroic men of the victorious Islamic revolution steadfastly confronted this treacherous attack and inflicted major losses, both human and material, on the tyrant's forces.

The Islamic resistance sources in al-Nasiriyah say that the tyrant's attacking forces used various kinds of weapons against the citizens, including 120-mm mortars.

The same sources say white clouds, the nature of which was not identified, were seen above the areas shelled by the forces of criminal Saddam.

The sources say that the 'Aflaqite [reference to al-Ba'th Party Founder Michel 'Aflaq] forces are now trying to regroup to attack the innocent people in the same area once again.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Reports Clashes in Al-Basrah Governorate

JN3107140296 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As the valiant mujahidin continue to inflict defeats against the Saddam regime forces in the marshlands in southern Iraq, the Islamic resistance continues to deal one blow after the other to the tyrant's defeated forces.

In the marshlands of the rebellious al-Basrah Governorate, the Islamic resistance heroes in Hawr Tulayl recently launched an attack against some 'Aflaqite [reference to al-Ba'th Party Founder Michel 'Aflaq] positions, leaving seven Saddamist soldiers dead and many others wounded. Others fled the blows dealt by our heroic mujahidin.

Islamic resistance sources in the south report that Staff Major Ra'id Salman al-Husayn, the commander of the tyrant's forces that arrived to replace the defeated troops, was summoned to Baghdad and replaced by another commander. The sources say the fate of al-Husayn is still unknown. However, military sources in Baghdad confirm that the said officer was liquidated by Saddam's authorities, who usually liquidate the commanders of their defeated units.

Iraq: Opposition Radio Reports Two Regime 'Henchmen' Killed

JN3107150696 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Valiant citizens in al-Shatrah District, al-Nasiriyah Governorate, recently confronted the gangs of aggression and plunder which are known as Saddam Fedayeen. Clashes, in which light weapons were used, took place between the two sides.

Our sources report that two regime henchmen were killed and several others were seriously wounded in the clashes. A number of innocent citizens were also injured by the tyrant regime's gangsters.

The sources add that the regime's security agencies launched an extensive arrest campaign among the citizens in al-Shatrah and transferred some prisoners to unknown locations.

In another repressive measure, the authorities withdrew the ration cards of some 23 families in al-Shatrah.

Groups from Saddam Fedayeen gangsters stormed the houses of several citizens in the city on the pretext that they possessed unlicensed weapons.

Iraq: Further on Iraqi General Al-Qasir's 'Escape'

NC3107150296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi opposition sources have confirmed reports that Major General Nizar al-Qasir has fled Iraq. These sources said al-Qasir is expected to appear abroad soon, to join other senior Iraqi military commanders who managed to leave Iraq recently. An Iraqi opposition source said that Maj. Gen. al-Qasir managed to flee Iraq for abroad via the northern areas

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that separate Iraq from Turkey and which are not under the control of the tyrant's authorities. The source said that al-Qasir will appear in Germany, because he knows the country well since he studied and graduated at its universities in the 1970's.

The opposition source considered Maj. Gen. al-Qasir's escape to be as important and serious as Husayn Kamil's escape to Jordan last year, in view of the importance of the post he occupied in the military establishment. He served as assistant to Husayn Kamil in industrial military projects, particularly the so-called super-gun project, which tyrant Saddam revealed in 1990. The source stressed that al-Qasir's escape is considered to be a crushing blow to the ruling regime, particularly to Saddam Husayn personally, because the secrets he knows are far greater than those that Husayn Kamil knew, as he knew the regime's arms programs and the relationships among the subsidiary programs.

The Iraqi opposition source expects al-Qasir's escape to reveal more of the Iraqi regime's military secrets.

Iraq: Split Reported in National Accord Movement

JN3107172396 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 27 Jul 96 p 3

[Report by Majid Tawbah]

[FBIS Translated Text] The opposition Iraqi National Accord Movement's ranks has split over the defection of a top Iraqi Army officer. Brigadier General 'Adnan Muhammad Nuri announced his withdrawal from the group to protest what he called the movement's failure to reform itself at a time when the country's population is being victimized by the regime in Baghdad. Various figures within the movement, he charged, were taking measures and pursuing policies without the knowledge of the grouping's General Congress. Such practices, he asserted, were hardly the recipe for bringing down the regime. The defector made an unveiled allegation that the movement had been infiltrated by the Iraqi and foreign intelligence services.

Gen. Nuri is in charge of the department handling Northern Iraq, Kurdistan, and a member of the National Accord Movement's general secretariat. His defection brings into focus the weaknesses and internal differences besetting the movement.

In a letter to what he calls the earliest members of the secretariat — Dr. Salah al-Shaykhali and Dr. Husayn Mu'alla — explaining his resignation, Gen. 'Adnan Nuri, indicated that he had made a repeated request for an urgent meeting to discuss important developments about which the general secretariat was being kept in the dark.

His letter features a number of points about which he raises questions and has reservations. For instance, he points out that allegations have been made in the movement's circles in London, Damascus, and Amman that an adherent of the National Accord Movement contacted Israel's Mosad twice without the knowledge of any one of the political bureau's members.

Gen. Nuri is also critical of decisions and practices that are at odds with the movement's bylaw. He notes that the political bureau members are elected through the General Congress. All members of the political bureau, he adds, seem to be oblivious to what is going on around them, but they do care about receiving support money and allocations. His letter is especially critical of the secret congress whose activity the political bureau members seem to know nothing about.

Gen. Nuri charges that the National Accord Movement is seeking to split the Iraqi opposition's ranks and discredit the Iraqi people, especially the intellectuals, politicians, and military personnel of good repute. His letter also charges that the movement conducts itself in such a way as to foster confessional and racial discrimination.

Gen. Nuri's letter rebuts the charge that he works as an agent of the Baghdad regime. How can that be, he asks? As a rebuttal, he notes that Salah al-Shaykhali and Tahsin Ma'allah advised him to travel to London, after they had received a tip that a hit squad had been sent by the Baghdad regime to assassinate him. The plan was for him to return to Ankara once the Turkish authorities had caught the would-be assassins. What do you make of that? Gen. Nuri's letter asks.

He goes on to maintain that all kinds of tactics have been adopted to alienate many of those who had broken ranks with the regime to join the movement — top military officers, university professors, and National Assembly members. Is this how you go about toppling a regime? Gen. Nuri asks.

After Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji had to leave Iraq, Gen. Nuri says, he began to come under fire. "Although I would have preferred him to stay in Iraq and I had nothing to do with his decision to leave the country," Nuri continues. "I strove to co-opt him into our movement and I also sought to sway many of the military officers based in Saudi Arabia and Jordan to join our grouping. But all of them said no. As to why they should refuse to join us, the political bureau might have the answer."

The principal reason why I turned up at the press conference in Amman, Gen. Nuri's letter continues, was to work in earnest to overthrow the regime, along the

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lines of the plan you said was in place. It turned out that such a plan did not exist. What was on the table was a plan to undo certain personalities and fragment the opposition. "I will not be party to a plan that seeks to substitute one Saddam for another," the letter says.

Gen. Nuri is vehemently opposed to targeting livelihoods, especially of those who rose against the regime during the heroic March [1991] revolution. "This is not any different from the tactics of the General Congress, which have led to families becoming beggars along the road to Zakhu. I am sympathetic toward them. I will continue to take the side of the underdogs. Ask the officers based in Libya and Syria, ask Riyad al-Fartus in Russia, ask 'Abd- al-Karim al-Majidi in the Netherlands, Sahib Kazim in Sweden, and Khalaf Jayyad. They will bear me out. I have stood by many people who were abandoned. I was imprisoned by successive regimes because I will not stand for injustice. As for now, my pen will work to put things in perspective. What I have to say is enough to fill many volumes," Gen. Nuri's letter adds.

He noted that the Kuwait Government has taken a less than positive stand. The Kuwaiti Government, he observed, has even folded its 15-minute radio broadcast that pleaded the cause of the Kuwaiti POW's. "This shows that both the Kuwait Government and Saddam Husayn want to keep the prisoners case on hold," Gen. Nuri contends.

The defector indicated that the political bureau met to review his case without calling on him to present his side of the story. He said he valued Hamid al-Juburi for taking his side.

Gen. Nuri's letter concluded: "I take pride in my Iraqi-Turkoman origin and my active service in the ranks of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party since 1954, during which time I held pan-Arab sentiments and believed in the Arab nation's future. I take pride in my affiliation to Iraq, and I stand by each and every Iraqi without distinction of sect, ethnicity, or religion."

Gen. Nuri has lived outside Iraq since 1975. He fled to Turkey, acquired Turkish citizenship, and then wed a Turk. He joined the opposition National Accord Movement in 1991. In recognition of his stature and military rank, he was appointed to the movement's political bureau. Members are usually elected rather than appointed, as happened in his case.

The National Accord Movement's official spokesman in Amman has rejected the interpretation of Gen. Nuri's withdrawal from the movement as a split within the grouping. He called it an isolated case of voluntary separation. The spokesman explained that back in March 1996, Gen. Nuri was relocated from northern Iraq, where he had been the movement's man, to the Turkish arena, per a unanimous decision by the political bureau. But the move did not suit him on personal grounds.

Speaking to AL-URDUN, the movement's official spokesman said that upon his decision to retire, the political bureau asked Gen. Nuri to move to the London office. Gen. Nuri turned down the offer, preferring to quit the movement altogether. The spokesman denied that other leading figures also quit the movement.

On why the movement decided to transfer Gen. Nuri from northern Iraq, the spokesman said that Gen. Nuri was involved in differences with the area's opposition parties, and they suggested it would be best if he was replaced.

Essentially a military man, Gen. Nuri found it tough to blend in political action in northern Iraq, which led the movement to decide to move him to Turkey. He was replaced in northern Iraq by Burhan Kazim, a political bureau member. The latter is on good terms with opposition forces in northern Iraq and has been able to get along with them. Kazim succeeded in introducing new military bases in the region.

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Israel: Netanyahu Visits 'Unrevealed Destination' 26 Jul

TA0108060096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Aug 96 pp 1-2

[Report by David Makovsky]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu slipped out of the country with several aides last Friday [26 July] and flew to an unrevealed destination, sources say.

Far distances seem to be ruled out, since Netanyahu was seen at Friday's cabinet meeting, which gave him little time if he sought to reach his destination before Shabbat. Netanyahu is believed to have returned late Saturday night.

Some observers speculate on a meeting in France with President Jacques Chirac, for several reasons. Netanyahu's office confirmed Thursday night that the premier spoke to Chirac by phone. The two had met when Netanyahu was in the opposition. A day before, Netanyahu held talks in Jerusalem with French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette.

France is believed to be a key player in Lebanon, and Netanyahu's main diplomatic initiative is a Lebanon-first approach, which could lead to an agreement with Syria for an Israeli pullout from Lebanon in return for security arrangements.

Moreover, France just hosted a meeting this week of the top seven industrialized states to discuss antiterrorism measures. Netanyahu, who wrote a book on how the West could win the war against terrorism, would seem to have a key interest in the outcome of this week's discussions.

Another possibility for a quiet Netanyahu trip could be Bonn. Netanyahu is considered to have been impressed with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, whom the premier also met while in the opposition. Germany mediated last week's exchange of Hizballah prisoners and bodies for the remains of two IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers missing in Lebanon.

One official in the Prime Minister's Office said, "I can flatly deny that the prime minister visited any Moslem state, including any Arab country." He refused to relate to other possibilities.

Shay Bazaq, the prime minister's spokesman, denies that Netanyahu left the country.

Israel: Prime Minister's Bureau Denies Report on Syrian Visit

TA0108060796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Syrian envoy visited Israel several weeks ago, where he met Prime Minister Netanyahu regarding the latter's "Lebanon First" proposal. Our correspondent Shlomo Raz reports:

[Raz] The prime minister's bureau denies the report that a Syrian envoy indeed visited Israel and met Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu — but there is room for believing that this denial is not necessarily of a sweeping nature. It is well known that attempts are being made to create some sort of an Israeli-Syrian dialogue venue — not necessarily via the U.S. peace team. The Americans are aware of these attempts.

The prime minister is striving to promote the "Lebanon First" idea. He believes that President Clinton does not reject this idea out of hand. During his visit to the United States, Netanyahu raised this proposal in detail. Israeli sources say that French President Chirac, who has a vested historic interest in Lebanon, also does not reject this idea.

The inner cabinet has recently held at least two sessions regarding the Lebanon issue. The ministers have been told that it will be very difficult to promote the idea of "Lebanon First," because Syria rejects it. The prime minister believes, however, that there is a solid basis for advancing his "Lebanon First" proposal.

Israel: 'Lebanon First' Said Primarily for 'Internal Consumption'

TA0108101496 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 p A2

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli analysts believe there is no chance that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad will accept Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's proposed interim arrangement involving a withdrawal from the security zone in Lebanon. According to these analysts, al-Asad will not want to let go of the bargaining chip provided by the Israeli presence in south Lebanon.

This assessment was conveyed to the political level in two meetings of the inner cabinet summoned by the prime minister to study the situation in Lebanon, which he regards as most urgent. In the meetings, held on 21 and 30 July, the ministers heard reviews by various analysis groups and sought clarifications about all the options for an arrangement in the north.

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A security source stated yesterday that the prime minister's proposed "Lebanon First" arrangement was primarily meant for internal consumption, apparently to underscore the fact that the government is trying to promote a political arrangement on the Syrian track as well and is prepared to offer limited concessions without discussing a withdrawal from the Golan.

Netanyahu elaborated on the "Lebanon First" proposal in his meetings with U.S. President Bill Clinton and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The basic premise of the proposal is an Israeli withdrawal from the security zone in exchange for disarming Hizballah and enforcing security arrangements backed by Syria.

In Netanyahu's opinion, Israel made a mistake when it tried to differentiate between Syria and Lebanon and to conduct direct talks with the Beirut government. This was the reason for the failure of the agreement with Lebanon in May 1983, which was called off under Syrian pressure.

Netanyahu explained that the reason behind his "Lebanon First" proposal was to build confidence in Israel's relationship with Syria and to prevent a dangerous escalation in Lebanon. Even before the elections he proposed to the Syrians not to discuss at this stage a full peace whose price would be a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. In his opinion, Israel and Syria may formulate security- oriented interim arrangements without normalization.

Associates of the prime minister say the Syrians did not want to reach an arrangement with the Labor government despite the fact that Yitzhaq Rabin and Shim'on Peres expressed willingness to withdraw from the entire Golan Heights. Consequently, those associates believe that the Syrians will agree to tacit understandings with Israel which would enhance Syria's grip in Lebanon and would not jeopardize al-Asad's regime through normalization plans.

Political adviser Dore Gold presented the prime minister's peace concept when he met Walid al-Mu'allim, the Syrian ambassador in the United States and chief delegate to the talks with Israel, on 12 July in Washington. The meeting took place on the fringes of the conclusion of the establishment of the monitoring committee on Lebanon. Gold told al-Mu'allim that the Netanyahu government wants to resume the negotiations with Syria and is committed to continuing the peace process and raised the "Lebanon First" idea. Netanyahu later recounted that al-Mu'allim did not respond to the proposals, but promised to relay them to Damascus.

U.S. peace coordinator Dennis Ross, who met with al-Asad and Netanyahu last week, came away with the impression that the gaps between them were not as deep as he had thought prior to their meeting. Both sides agree to resume the negotiations based on the formula of the letter of invitation to the Madrid conference, which is based on UN Resolution 242, a resolution subject to different interpretations.

The disagreement revolves around Syria's demand to resume the discussions from the point at which they were halted by Peres more than four months ago. The Syrians say it is inconceivable to go back to square one after almost five years of negotiations. They also reject the "Lebanon First" notion and refuse to consider it a basis for the talks when these resume.

Netanyahu stated this week that he is examining a Syrian proposal to resume the talks "which contains various aspects," and has not yet relayed his response to al-Asad.

Israel: Mordekhay Says Yasin Release Unrelated to MIA Body Recovery

TA3107134396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay says the issue of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's release is not related to the discovery of Ilan Sa'adon's body. The issue will be raised when the various security elements find it appropriate to do so. The defense minister praised the Palestinian intelligence apparatus. He added, however, that Israel is concerned about the release of a large number of detainees — some of whom have already resumed terrorist activities. Minister Mordekhay made these remarks upon leaving the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee session.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir says that the minister said, among other things, that last month four attempts were been made to locate the missing submarine Daqar, but these attempts failed and the searches will continue. Searches will also continue for 18 IDF [Israel Defense Forces] MIA's in Egypt. This issue was raised in the meeting between Netanyahu and Mubarak.

Israel: Mordekhay on Yasin Release, Talks With Syria, JANE'S Report

TA3107171196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay says Israel is likely to consider releasing imprisoned Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] founder Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. Mordekhay would not, however, link the shaykh's release to the discovery of

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the remains of the body believed to be that of kidnapped and murdered soldier Ilan Sa'adon. The defense minister appeared today in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. He said Israel would like to negotiate a deal which would result in the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay downplayed the role of the Palestinians in discovering the body believed to be that of Ilan Sa'adon. The defense minister was cautious, noting that the body had not yet been definitively identified. Mordekhay said Israeli intelligence had reached the conclusion of where it was possible to find the body. Still, Israel would press the Palestinian Authority [PA] for further information on other missing Israelis.

[Mordekhay] Well, we are connecting the PA with our people that are in the area, and we will continue to do and to ask the PA to do their best in this subject and in other subjects that we are dealing with them.

[Ze'ev] The defense minister was speaking to reporters after the meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. He was asked whether Israel would release the imprisoned founder of the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

[Mordekhay] We have a lot of military and security subjects in our table and we are dealing with that. One of the subjects, I think, in the future will be Ahmad Yasin.

[Ze'ev] Inside the committee, a Knesset official quotes Mordekhay as saying there is good cooperation with Palestinian intelligence. But he said Israel is not pleased about the number of activists released by the PA, some of whom — the defense minister maintained — will apparently return to terrorist activity.

Mordekhay continues to promote the idea of Lebanon first in negotiations with Syria. He says he told American envoy Dennis Ross, who was here last week, that such a formula would build confidence and prevent difficulties in the future, as the defense minister put it. Speaking to reporters, Mordekhay said Syria should also want to tackle the Lebanon problem first, before holding talks on Israeli-Syrian peace.

[Mordekhay] Lebanon — it's a problem for everybody that have any interest in Lebanon, and I think it will be high interest to Syria too to come to negotiations about the Lebanon situation. From there we can start, and then we can continue.

[Ze'ev] Mordekhay told the committee the objective would be the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon, including both Syrian and Israeli troops — but only once the militias in southern Lebanon are disarmed and security can be ensured along the border with Israel. Unless those conditions are met, the defense minister said, Israel has no intention of pulling out.

He also told the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that he ordered an investigation into the disclosures in the JANE'S British defense magazine on the Israeli Air Force. The defense minister said publication of the details caused damage to the very core of Israeli security, and that anyone caught having provided the information should be punished to the full extent of the law.

[Mordekhay] Well, I hope that our people and others can shut their mouths and not speak so much about military subjects. These subjects make damage for our army and our security.

[Ze'ev] Committee Chairman 'Uzi Landau of the Likud urged Defense Minister Mordekhay not to go ahead with the meeting with PA head Yasir 'Arafat. Landau said the results of the meeting last week between 'Arafat and Foreign Minister David Levi were that the Palestinian leader praised master bomb maker Yahya 'Ayyash, killed last January; that 'Arafat released detainees; and that he provided assistance to the infrastructure of Hamas. [end recording]

Israel: Shaykh Yasin Release Said Linked to Information on MIA's

TA0108110196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] A senior security source yesterday said that in addition to the Palestinian Authority [PA] and its security apparatuses — which helped obtain information regarding the burial place of Ilan Sa'adon's body — a European country aided in the efforts. The source said that contacts on the issue started several months prior to the recent Israeli elections.

Former Prime Minister Shim'on Peres yesterday confirmed these remarks when he said that another country — not the United States — aided regarding the information on Ilan Sa'adon. The country involved is apparently France or Germany. [passage omitted]

Security sources yesterday told HA'ARETZ that the issue of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] spiritual leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin's release is linked to a comprehensive deal involving information regarding the al-Sultan Ya'qub battle MIA's. The sources say that the Palestinians have agreed to provide new information

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regarding the three Israeli MIA's from that battle, adding that if significant information on this issue is furnished, Shaykh Yasin will be released. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0400 GMT on 1 August adds: "A senior source in the Palestinian Authority says that Palestinian security services have succeeded in identifying a spot where they believe it is possible the three Israeli soldiers missing since the al-Sultan Ya'qub battle in Lebanon may lie. The senior Palestinian source told Qol Yisra'el reporter Yoni Ben-Menahem that this was a breakthrough in the case of the missing soldiers. The source said the information had been passed on to Israel."]

Israel: Hirschfeld on Permanent Arrangement Talks

TA3107135096 'Ofra NEQUDA in Hebrew Jul 96 pp 12-14

[Interview with Dr. Ya'ir Hirschfeld, former Israeli negotiator with the Palestinians, by Hagay Huberman; place and date not given—first four paragraphs NEQUDA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Ya'ir Hirschfeld's name was first revealed to the public following the Oslo negotiations when it was disclosed that two relatively anonymous academics — Dr. Ron Pundaq and Dr. Ya'ir Hirschfeld — worked on the accord behind the scenes for many months.

In the months prior to the elections, there were many reports in the press that Hirschfeld and Pundaq were once again secretly negotiating with the Palestinians, this time on the permanent settlement and with the full backing of Yosi Beilin, who was also one of the sponsors of Oslo A. The press insisted that understandings had already been reached and that Beilin and Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] had signed a document that included a formula for dividing up Jerusalem. Beilin and Labor, it is recalled, flatly denied the reports. Shim'on Peres called the Likud propaganda on the issue of the division of Jerusalem "libel."

Now, following Labor's failure in the elections, Hirschfeld agreed in an interview with NEQUDA to reveal some of the negotiations held with Beilin's support. Hirschfeld discloses that understandings were reached on a permanent settlement: The establishment of a Palestinian state on 90 percent of the territory of Judaea and Samaria and Israeli annexation of the remaining 10 percent, which contains 70 percent of the settlers of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. Further understandings: The Palestinian flag will fly on the Temple Mount, Israel will give up its sovereignty over the Old City, but the issue of sovereignty over East Jerusalem in general will remain open. The capital of Palestine, al-Quds, will be in Abu-Dis, southeast of the Old City. In fact, Hirschfeld confirms the existence of the Beilin-Abu Mazin document that "never existed."

Another disclosure: Yosi Beilin tried to persuade Peres to publish these understandings as part of Labor's advertising campaign in order to prove that the permanent settlement can be implemented. Peres refused. His reason: We should not deal with the permanent settlement before the elections but only afterward. "That was a major mistake," Hirschfeld believes. "Had we made them public, Labor would have remained in power."

[Huberman] Dr. Hirschfeld, was there an agreement on the permanent settlement?

[Hirschfeld] Agreement, no; but understandings, definitely yes. Theoretical, nonbinding understandings, but ones that could serve as possible solutions for difficult issues — the settlement problem, security, Jerusalem, refugees — all the issues that must be raised for discussion in the permanent settlement.

[Huberman] Let us discuss each of these issues. Settlements: What solution could have been reached on that?

[Hirschfeld] In the dialogue with them, we understood very clearly that an arrangement could be reached whereby 70 percent of the settlers would remain in the territory to be annexed to Israel. We told them that a Palestinian state is possible only if the main conditions determined by Yitzhaq Rabin are met. The main ones were: No return to the 1967 lines. They accepted that condition. On the basis of that understanding, we tried to see if we could draw up a map. In fact, we managed to draw a map of a permanent settlement, which is more or less the same as Yosi Alpher's map, which means that 70 percent of the settlers would remain in the territories annexed to Israel.

[Huberman] What about the settlements that were to remain inside the Palestinian state?

[Hirschfeld] The agreement was that no settlement would be abandoned and that there would be negotiations on the type of ties between the settlements and the Palestinian Authority. this was not finalized. At no stage was there an undertaking on that issue between us and the Palestinians.

[Huberman] When we say "the Palestinians," what level are we talking about? Was 'Arafat aware of these negotiations? Was he prepared to accept that map?

[Hirschfeld] It is difficult for me to say. I can tell you that the most senior level encouraged it.

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[Huberman] What is "the most senior level."

[Hirschfeld] The press called it the Beilin-Abu-Mazin document.

[Huberman] The Likud said "Peres will divide Jerusalem." What do you think of that slogan?

[Hirschfeld] The contrary is true. We made very clear demands — for example, the annexation of Ma'ale Adumim and Giv'at Ze'ev to Jerusalem and the preservation of Jerusalem as a Jewish city within the municipal boundaries and beyond — while recognizing certain Palestinian demands — free access to the Temple Mount and the Holy Sepulcher, and the right to establish the capital of the Palestinian state outside Jerusalem's municipal boundary — without resolving all the sovereignty issues at this stage.

[Huberman] Did the Palestinians give up their desire to have their capital in Jerusalem?

[Hirschfeld] We agreed that the Palestinian capital would be established in Abu-Dis which, from our point of view, is outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. From their viewpoint, they would have seen it as part of Jerusalem and called it al-Quds. That was clear. They could have claimed that the Temple Mount is Palestinian. They would have received things that they consider very important, and then they could have put the extremists in their place.

[Huberman] You said that the Temple Mount was due to become Palestinian. Can you give us more details?

[Hirschfeld] It was agreed that the Palestinians would have free access to the Temple Mount and that the Palestinian flag would fly there. The Old City itself would have remained without sovereignty, but sovereignty would have been Israeli in practice — although not recognized by the Palestinians — under the control of the Jerusalem Municipality. In other words, the Israel Police alone and no other police force would be there. All that was not officially agreed upon, but there was an understanding that it was a very serious basis for discussion.

[Huberman] What about the Arab neighborhoods in the city, such as Ra's al-'Amud, al-'Ayzariyah, Bayt Hanina, or al-Shaykh Jarrah, where Orient House is located?

[Hirschfeld] Agreement was reached on the structure of the Jerusalem Municipality based on Teddy Kollek's plan.

[Huberman] What about sovereignty over these neighborhoods?

[Hirschfeld] The discussions on sovereignty were to be put off until much later stages, with no time limit.

[Huberman] But we are talking about the permanent arrangement. Would these neighborhoods remain without sovereignty under the permanent arrangement?

[Hirschfeld] The understanding was that the Palestinians would recognize western Jerusalem as Israel's capital and that we would recognize al-Quds, which is outside Jerusalem's municipal borders, as the capital of Palestine. We would not conclusively resolve the issue of sovereignty. That was agreed upon by both parties.

[Huberman] Is al-Quds not Jerusalem?

[Hirschfeld] The Palestinians kept on saying: We have the dream of a Palestinian state with al-Quds as its capital. If you help us realize our dream, we will help you fulfill yours. They understand that our dream is to provide real security, maintain the settlers' right to remain in most of the settlements, and resolve the refugee problem together with the Palestinians so as to finally put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They were prepared to realize both these dreams, and the historic path to this compromise is still open.

[Huberman] When you talk about "our dream," it sounds as if you are incorporating the settlers' dream as well.

[Hirschfeld] The paradox here is that it was the existence of the settlements that engendered Israel's historic recognition of the need to reach a compromise with the Palestinians leading to a Palestinian state in the first place. Only a territorial-geographical agreement could guarantee the future existence of the settlements, with the approval not only of Israel but of the Palestinians and the entire Arab world. The truth is that realizing the settlers' dream is the key to a territorial solution and does not leave room for any other solution such as a functional compromise.

[Huberman] But the settlers' dream is not merely to annex 10 percent of the territory to Israel but to maintain Israeli control over all the settlements on the mountain ridges, as well as over all the biblical towns such as Nabulus, Bethlehem, and Hebron, for which Jews feel a deep emotional attachment. This agreement would shatter their dream.

[Hirschfeld] A dream can only be realized if it does not become the nightmare of the other side. If it turns into a nightmare for other people, historically it cannot be implemented. Today, the settlers face a real dilemma. They have to understand what they can accomplish within reality's constraints. Failure to recognize the limits of what can be accomplished will engender an eternal conflict, with terrorism being replaced by war.

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[Huberman] Actually you should be thanking the settlers for bringing about the historic need to reach a compromise.

[Hirschfeld] I am not rejecting the claim that the settlers played a very important historic role. I also understand the dream of settling Eretz Yisra'el. I am only calling on the settlers to demonstrate the historic intelligence about the Jews, to recognize the limits, and to act in accordance with the existing historic parameters, accept reality, and agree to a historic compromise. All this is possible today.

[Huberman] How long do you think it would have taken to attain a permanent arrangement with the Palestinians had Peres stayed in power?

[Hirschfeld] The Palestinians told us that another month or two of negotiations would be needed to wrap up all these issues.

[Huberman] Would we have signed an agreement within a month or two?

[Hirschfeld] Let's say it would have taken another six months. In any event, it is a pity to put off until 1999 whatever can be wrapped up now.

[Huberman] What do the "nonbinding understandings" you mentioned mean? Is it possible that such understandings would not have been accepted after the elections?

[Hirschfeld] All negotiations consists of several stages. There is the exploratory stage, which is very important, in which you determine what is possible and what is not. In fact, you "play" at negotiating to ascertain what you can demand. Then you proceed to the official negotiations. It is true that negotiations may blow up in the second stage, but I don't think they would have since some sort of relationship of trust has emerged between us.

[Huberman] If I am not mistaken, the Oslo A negotiations were conducted in a similar manner.

[Hirschfeld] In Oslo A the noncommittal explorations lasted from 20 January to 20 May 1993. An understanding was reached about a document we said was not binding on anyone. Uri Savir entered the picture on 20 May, and Yo'el Singer on 10 June. They came up with at a new document where some of the initial principles were kept and others were altered. This is not the place to elaborate on this, but the explorations were the basis for the agreement.

[Huberman] Did you follow a similar pattern in this case?

[Hirschfeld] Yes, in this case, too, the discussions were aimed at preparing the ground for the official negotiations. There is a certain similarity in the format of the negotiations about the permanent arrangement and the discussions on Oslo A.

[Huberman] Why weren't these understandings publicized before the elections?

[Hirschfeld] I suppose Labor's position was that the discussions about the permanent arrangement should be put off until after victory in the elections. There was a great deal of complacency and a feeling that victory was in their pocket. Shim'on Peres thought it would be wrong to deal with the issue before the elections, and he banned publication.

[Huberman] Had Labor announced this plan in its election campaign, do you think it would have benefited or hurt it?

[Hirschfeld] I am absolutely sure that had it presented this plan Labor would have won the elections. A large number of settlers would have also voted for it because it ensures their eternal existence and the fulfillment of their dream to settle in the places where most of them live. I am absolutely convinced that it was a big mistake not to publicize it.

[Huberman] How come Yosi Beilin, the man behind the plan and one of Peres' closest associates, failed to persuade him to publish it?

[Hirschfeld] That is a fact. Beilin tried to persuade Peres, but the prevailing opinion in the party, including Peres, was that this issue ought to be discussed after the elections, not before them. In my opinion, Beilin should continue to fight his party so this plan is accepted as Labor's political program with a view to returning to power. I will try to persuade Labor. I would also suggest that the current government implement this plan.

Israel: Beilin Says NEQUDA Report 'Basically True'

TA3107091296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with Israel's Labor Party MK Yosi Beilin by anchor Arye Golan; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Golan] In an interview to the settler monthly NEQUDA, Dr. Ya'ir Hirschfeld, one of the pioneers of the Oslo talks, has revealed that, prior to the elections, he reached understandings with the Palestinians on the permanent arrangement. According to these understandings, a Palestinian state would be established on 90 percent of the land in the

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territories, while the remaining 10 percent of the West Bank, where 70 percent of the Jewish settlers live, would be annexed to the State of Israel. In addition, a Palestinian flag would fly on the Temple Mount; neither party would have sovereignty over Jerusalem's Old City, but it would remain under Israeli control; and the capital of Palestine, al-Quds, would be situated in the neighborhood of Abu-Dis, which is outside Jerusalem's municipal boundaries. Another important clause states that no Jewish settlements in the territories will be dismantled. These understandings were reached with the support of Dr. Yosi Beilin and, according to NEQUDA, were consolidated in a document called the Beilin-Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] document. Good morning to Labor party Knesset Member [MK] Yosi Beilin.

[Beilin] Good morning.

[Golan] Can you confirm all the details revealed by Dr. Hirschfeld to NEQUDA?

[Beilin] I cannot confirm all the details, but the report is basically true. It is a very important story. I believe that there is a future to these understandings, because if we really seek a durable arrangement, there is no way that any permanent solution between Israel and the Palestinians can differ from them radically.

[Golan] Why were all previous reports on this matter denied prior to the elections? Why did Labor refuse to reveal the facts after these understandings were reached and you had met with Abu-Mazin personally on this matter?

[Beilin] First of all, it was never denied. You cannot say that the reports about a very serious dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian officials, with the backing, support, and participation of Abu-Mazin and myself, were ever denied. Ze'ev Schiff reported these contacts in HA'ARETZ along more or less the same lines. No agreements, neither written nor oral, were reached. We never reached any agreements....

[Golan, interrupting] You are referring to yourself and Abu-Mazin?

[Beilin] That is correct. Neither were there any agreements at the academic level. There was a very interesting and complex process which began in October 1993. One month after the signing of the Oslo agreements, there was a meeting between me and Yasir 'Arafat. We told each other that it was best to start off with an academic attempt to discover where the parties could find common ground before launching the difficult negotiations on the permanent arrangement which would deal with the most sensitive issues like settlements, borders, Jerusalem, and the refugee issue. And indeed, what happened then was that a group of four people consisting of two Palestinians from Chatham House in London and two Israelis — and I discussed the matter with Ya'ir Hirschfeld and Ron Pundaq, who had engaged in similar activity in Oslo — held discussions in which I and Abu-Mazin were involved. Most of the time, the contacts were held in Sweden and under Swedish auspices, and the participants prepared a paper which contained several options. What is not completely accurate in your report is that no concrete understandings were reached on all the issues, and there was more than one option on several issues. Furthermore, with regard to Jerusalem, it should be clarified that all the arrangements and options clearly stipulated that Jerusalem would remain united under Israeli sovereignty. That does not mean that the Palestinians were prepared to recognize....

[Golan, interrupting] Except for the Old City and the Temple Mount, which would be under the Palestinian flag. The question is whether there was indeed some truth to the Likud's election slogan that Peres will divide Jerusalem.

[Beilin] Quite the contrary. What Hirschfeld is saying is that if this agreement — which does not call for a return to the 1967 borders and contains no mention of an armed Palestinian state, the return of refugees, or the redivision of Jerusalem, but rather posits a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty — had been made public — all those allegations could not have been leveled against us. Ultimately, all we did during the election campaign was issue denials without proving that it is possible — although there was no agreement — to reach a totally different kind of arrangement with the Palestinians.

[Golan] Why was Shim'on Peres opposed to making this agreement public during the election campaign?

[Beilin] First of all, unlike Hirschfeld, I am not of the opinion that had we published the plan, we would have undoubtedly won the elections. I do not want to join the chorus of people who know exactly what we needed to do to win the elections. It is true, however, that we completed the talks on the academic level in October 1995, and our intention was to present the results to Peres and former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin in order to continue the negotiations. At the time, Abu-Mazin said that, in his opinion, we would be able to complete the negotiations at the political level within a month or two and present them to the public in the elections scheduled to be held in October 1996. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin was assassinated. I showed the material to Peres a week after the assassination, and he said that he preferred to get through the elections and then negotiate with a mandate from the Israeli people rather than present an initialed agreement to the public and then turn the

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elections into a national referendum on an agreement that contained certain clauses that might be unacceptable to some people. Although I disagreed with him, I think his considerations were very legitimate.

[Golan] And as they say, the rest is history.

[Beilin] Arye, please don't say that. I believe the rest is the future.

[Golan] Thank you, Dr. Yosi Beilin.

Israel: Sharon on 'Quiet Campaign' To Buy Land in Territories, East Jerusalem

TA3107183296 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Video report by Tzipi Brandt]

[FBIS Translated Text] National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon has set out on a quiet campaign to buy land in the territories and in East Jerusalem. Sharon has ordered the purchase of any land put up for sale and the completion of purchases of land beyond the Green Line which were frozen by the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Our correspondent Tzipi Brandt has the details:

[Begin recording] [Brandt] This is how the national infrastructure minister defined the goal of the Israel Land Authority [ILA] yesterday.

[Sharon] It is not only a source of state revenue. As I see it, it is the main tool or instrument the government has to attain national goals.

[Brandt] Away from the cameras Sharon issued precise guidelines to people in the construction business, instructing them to buy any land at any price. We have learned that activity is under way behind-the-scenes to resume large-scale land purchases in Judaea, Samaria, and in the Gaza District. Sharon's associates say his partner is Minister Refa'el Eytan. Together they are trying to revive the policy prevailing before the Oslo agreements. At that time hundreds of millions of shekels were earmarked to buy land in the territories through Palestinian straw men. It transpired today that the budget of the ILA, which is required by law to use its revenues only for purchases within the Green Line, contained a secret clause concerning purchases in the vicinity of Jerusalem and in the territories.

There remain a few unfinished affairs from those days, as evidenced in the events near the settlement of Shilo 10 days ago. To this day the Arabs think that the land was illegally taken away from them, but in fact, at least part of it was purchased by straw men. The same applies to East Jerusalem and Silwan. A state commission looking into the affair determined that the ILA and the Custodian of Absentee Property became the long arm of nonprofit organizations aspiring to settle Jews in the Muslim Quarter and in Silwan, enlisting the maximum possible government resources to this end and turning the state budget into their private coffers.

Upon his appointment as prime minister, Rabin ordered the freeze of all purchases. However, associates of Sharon and Eytan looked into the matter over the last two weeks, and their check revealed that dozens of deals may be thawed out and that buildings and land may be purchased at once.

[Palestinian Authority member Ziyad Abu-Zayyad] It is a crime, it is very dangerous, it will torpedo the entire peace process. It must be stopped.

[Brandt] Sharon's reaction this evening was: I did not deal with the issue. As of this time, we have not obtained a reaction from Minister Refa'el Eytan. [end recording]

Israel: Sharon Denies Plans To Purchase Land in Territories

TA0108111696 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 pp 8-9

[Report by 'Ofer Petersburg]

[FBIS Translated Text] Plans for large-scale purchases of thousands of dunams of land beyond the Green Line (some of them to be conducted through straw companies in Brazil, Cyprus, and the United States) are currently being examined by nonprofit societies headed by associates of Minister Ari'el Sharon. The latter has denied any involvement in the matter.

The overall plan involves the purchase of land to flesh out and develop existing settlements. It should be pointed out that the plans have not yet been formulated or budgeted by the National Infrastructure Ministry.

The land in question is located in the vicinity of settlements, bypass roads, and access roads. The sites include Efrat, various hills around East Jerusalem, Elqana, Sha'arey Tiqva, several settlements where there are plans to expand neighborhoods, along the road to Ari'el, around Qiryat Sefer (Modi'in 'Ilit), and to the extent possible, between Netiv Halamed He and Betar 'Ilit. The main thrust will be in the area of the "Seven Star" settlements, Sharon's grandiose old plan.

The possibility of reverting to the use of foreign straw companies in Brazil, Cyprus, and the United States is being contemplated, since this would be convenient both to the Arabs who fear for their lives and for tax purposes.

The Fund for the Redemption of the Land, a body headed by associates of Sharon which suspended its

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activities during the Labor government and recently resumed them, has also compiled a huge and detailed list of available land, and its members will now try to implement their plans.

Minister Sharon conferred with Deputy Construction Minister Me'ir Porush to coordinate a joint real estate policy in the territories. They decided to appoint Porush's adviser Shim'on Einstein to coordinate all the demands and requirements concerning development and construction beyond the Green Line in order to prepare a detailed document to be presented to the prime minister.

Reacting to the report, Sharon's spokesman Sha'ya Segal said: "The policy of all Israeli Governments has always been to purchase and amass land, and this certainly is the policy of this government. Minister Sharon has not issued any specific order concerning the purchase of land in this or any other place. The alleged examination of hundreds of land deals in the territories, as reported in the media, is totally unfounded."

Israel: Sharon Promises To Build Thousands of Houses in Golan

TA0108115396 Tel Aviv (MAMON supplement) in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 p 5

[Report by 'Ofer Petersburg]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Netanyahu government is expected to build thousands of houses units when construction resumes in the Golan Heights, apparently in another three months. An agreement to this effect was reached in a meeting earlier this week between Golan settlement leaders and National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon.

The meeting with Sharon was held in view of the serious dispute between Golan settlers and Deputy Construction Minister Me'ir Porush who, so they claim, has frozen the sale of apartments in the Golan. Consequently, the settlers decided to turn to Sharon.

Knesset Member Yehuda Har'el, one of the leaders of The Third Way, recently sent a harshly worded letter to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu criticizing Porush for ordering the Shikun Upituah and 'Amidar building companies to stop promoting the sale of houses in the Golan, in contravention of the policy of the Labor government which encouraged settlement there.

According to Har'el, a number of families which had been supposed to move to their new homes these days have been forced to put off their plans due to this order. Porush said his action was based on an order to stop construction and marketing nationwide until a new housing policy has been set. [passage omitted]

Israel: IDF Paves Ramallah Bypass Road To 'Block' City Expansion

TA0108110696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Video report by Shlomi Eldar]

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is currently paving a security road bypassing Ramallah at a cost of 7 million shekels. The road is slated for carrying out security patrols around the city. Military sources confirm, however, that its construction is also aimed at preventing Ramallah's territorial expansion. This road will not serve the settlers or Ramallah's residents. Our correspondent in the territories Shlomi Eldar reports:

[Begin Eldar recording] The new road starts at Baytuniya and ends at an archaeological site. First question: Is the road being paved to provide access to archaeological sites? The road known as Ramallah Bypass 2 comes to an abrupt end here, and on the other side it ends on a mountain slop overlooking Ramallah and its environs.

Second question: Why is the IDF paving on these hills a long and winding road which is not meant for traveling purposes around Ramallah — or anywhere else for that matter. IDF sources today said this road will be an IDF patrol road aimed at preventing the infiltration of residents from Ramallah and its area. The road, however, is being built with another aim in mind, perhaps the main reason that has caused the IDF to pave this dead end road — namely, to demarcate the borders of the city which is being slated by the Palestinian Authority to be the West Bank's center. Ramallah may consequently expand, and this is precisely what the Israeli political sources fear. Will this road block this expansion?

Meanwhile the work on the road continues. Now the project is continuing on the east side of the city, with soldiers guarding the work. The earth works will be completed in a few days, at which point the actual paving will commence. The second stage of the work may take place near the houses of Ramallah residents.

Ramallah Bypass 2 is perhaps the first road to be paved not for travel purposes, but rather for restricting travel. [end recording]

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Israel: Mordekhay Reinstates Territories Forum

TA0108085996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay has decided to reinstate the territories forum and convene it once a week. The forum sessions will be attended by the chief of staff and the deputy chief of staff, the Shin Bet chief, the coordinator of government activities in the territories, the heads of the Central and Southern Commands, Police officers, the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch, and other representatives of the defense establishment.

Israel: Netanyahu Discusses Hebron Redeployment, Settlements

TA3107184896 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Video report by Shlomi Eldar, followed by talk in the studio between anchor Hayim Yavin and political correspondent Dan Scemama]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] The defense minister today explained that the redeployment in Hebron will be carried out. He said this during a visit to Hebron. The settlers said they will attempt to prevent an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment. Our correspondent Shlomi Eldar reports:

[Begin recording] [Eldar] Today, Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay toured Hebron for the third time in the last month and amidst heavy security. Mordekhay said the visit was aimed at studying the complicated problems of this sensitive city and at holding talks with the Jewish settlers in Qiryat Arba' and the Jewish quarter. The minister was accompanied by Major General Oren Shahor, the coordinator of activities in the territories, and Major General 'Uzi Dayan, commander of the IDF Central Command. When the IDF redeployment in Hebron is carried out, these two will be responsible for implementing the order — whose timing and details Minister Mordekhay wanted to study today.

Qiryat Arba' Mayor Tzvi Katzover and the settlers of the Jewish quarter described their problems and warned against implementing what they termed the dangerous order of an IDF redeployment in Hebron. Mordekhay told the settlers in unequivocal terms not to clash with the IDF forces.

[Mordekhay] The government decided in principle to fulfill the agreement, and the prime minister has already said as much. At the same time the government will make certain that the security of the Jews is not harmed. We are examining how to preserve security while implementing the agreement. Without security no agreement can be endorsed.

[Eldar] In a closed forum Mordekhay told the settlers there are ministers — whose names he did not mention — who support the implementation of the agreement. Is Mordekhay preparing them for a decision that has already been made?

Meanwhile the international forces are touring and supervising the area until the decision is made to evacuate the IDF from Hebron. [end recording]

[Yavin] Dani Scemama, will Hebron be evacuated within days?

[Scemama] I am not sure. Perhaps it is a matter of a few weeks. The issue was discussed today, and perhaps Mordekhay's visit to Hebron was meant to prepare the settlers, because he told them another thing which Shlomi did not mention — namely, that when the decision is made they must accept it in a good spirit, even if they do not like it.

[Yavin] So what are we talking about in terms of a timetable?

[Scemama] We are perhaps talking here about several weeks. The Hebron redeployment issue is described by the Prime Minister's Office high echelons as a hot potato which must be dealt with and which will be dealt with — the only question being the timing.

Today the prime minister held further consultations on the settlements issue with his inner circle of ministers — including Foreign Minister David Levi, Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay, National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon, and Finance Minister Dan Meridor. The main issue on the agenda was that of the settlements.

[Yavin] Will Sharon support this issue?

[Scemama] He will support the issue of the settlements, but I do not know what he will do about the issue of Hebron.

[Yavin] While giving with one hand, Netanyahu will be taking with the other. Hebron out [last word in English], while occupation of settlements in [last word in English].

[Scemama] Some ministers want to see a linkage between these two issues. We must give Hebron — they say — so let us populate the 3,000 housing units — and the decision on this issue can be made by the construction and housing minister alone. This minister being, as you know, Binyamin Netanyahu himself. It is possible that he will delay the announcement on this

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until his return from Jordan in order not to harm his visit to the kingdom.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 31 Jul adds: "A few days ago Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu decided to occupy 3,000 empty apartments built in Judaea and Samaria by the previous government."]

It is possible, however, that on 2 August the government will cancel Order No. 360, initiated by the previous government, which poses great difficulties on any construction activity in the territories — from kindergartens to bringing additional settlers into the territories.

[Yavin] Now we have to wait and see how the Hebron settlers will react to these developments.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 31 Jul adds: "The restrictions on construction in the territories imposed by the Rabin government may be lifted at the upcoming cabinet session" on 2 August. The report adds that in a meeting with Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay during a tour of Qiryat Arba' and the Jewish settlement in Hebron this afternoon, "the settlers expressed their disappointment and said they would oppose an IDF withdrawal from the city with all legal means. Mordekhay pleaded with them not to clash with the soldiers when the city is evacuated."]

Israel: Qahalani—Government 'To Stay on the Golan Heights'

TA0108071396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Yesterday Public Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani reassured residents of the Golan Heights that the area will remain under Israeli sovereignty. Qahalani visited the Golan and talked to residents:

[Begin recording] [Qahalani] The reason that I left the Labor Party before the elections is because of the Golan Heights — the idea to withdraw from the Golan Heights was an idea of the Labor Party, and now we have a new government, and in this government I am sure that we are going to stay on the Golan Heights, and there is no reason to be worried about it.

[Unidentified correspondent] And your visit reinforces this?

[Qahalani] Yes, of course. [end recording]

Israel: CIA Claim of Israeli Industrial Espionage Denied

TA3107181196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an official document addressed to U.S. Congress, the CIA says that Israel is involved in industrial espionage in the United States. The CIA's liaison with Congress said in a document addressed to the Select Committee on Intelligence that six countries are involved in industrial espionage against the United States: France, Israel, China, Russia, Iran, and Cuba. The document claims that these countries are systematically carrying out this activity.

This was learned by our correspondent in the United States.

In reaction, the spokesman of the Israeli Embassy in Washington said that this document is recycled old material and that Israel is not involved in any kind of espionage activity in the United States.

Israel: Hamas Setting Up New Military Wing in Gaza Strip

TA0108101296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 1 Aug 96 p 5

[Report by David Regev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] field activists in the Gaza Strip are setting up a new military wing with a view to resuming the terror attacks on Israel, a senior Israeli security source revealed.

The source added that the new wing is being established with the assistance and funding of the Hamas leadership overseas and is awaiting orders to stage the attacks. At this stage, the source noted, members of the new wing are keeping "a low profile" so as not to be exposed, but they are recruiting new activists and creating a cadre of potential suicide operators.

"'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, Hamas' traditional military wing in the Gaza Strip, was exposed by the Palestinian security services in the large wave of arrests, and some of its men were arrested and jailed. Field activists fear the Palestinian Authority 'bought off' 'Izz-al- Din al-Qassam members by promising them a series of benefits in exchange for their agreement to stop the attacks. Consequently, they recently began recruiting Hamas activists unknown to the Palestinian security services to be part of a new secret organization," the source explained.

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Meanwhile, another Israeli security source disclosed that according to information reaching the defense establishment, the military wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad have recently begun tightening their operational relations. "The two military wings are trying to recover from the blows dealt to them, and they have been tightening their operational relations in order to stage joint attacks," the source said.

Israel: President Pardons 3d Female Palestinian Prisoner

TA3107133696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President 'Ezer Weizman pardoned a third Palestinian female prisoner last week, but this was not publicized. Our correspondent Yafa Glick has learned that the prisoner is 'Ataf Alyan of Bethlehem, who was serving a 10-year prison sentence for attempting to murder a warden at Neve Tirza Prison. Earlier, she had been sentenced to four years for throwing a firebomb. Alyan, just like another prisoner pardoned by the president, refuses to go free until three other female prisoners are pardoned.

Israel: NEQUDA Press Review for Jun

TA2907115496

[FBIS Report] The following is a review of the June issue of NEQUDA, the monthly Hebrew-language magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. THese reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, commentaries, and other items with a bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

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2. To Strengthen and To Shackle
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OPENING PAGE

This 200-word column on page 7, signed by editor in chief Uri Elitzur, is entitled: "The Real Turnabout." Elitzur notes that the fact that Russian Jews, who less than a decade ago were jailed in the former Soviet Union, are now Knesset members and ministers in the Israel Government is symbolic of a historic turnabout which transcends the political results of the Israeli elections.

TO STRENGTHEN AND TO SHACKLE

This 1,500-word article by Yisra'el Har'el on pages 12 and 13 recounts how the late Prime Minister Menahem Begin caved in to U.S. pressure by recognizing Palestinian rights.

To prevent Netanyahu from repeating Begin's mistakes, the Jewish settlers are urged to "double and even triple" their number within the next four years and "strengthen Netanyahu and the entire government so as to enable them to withstand the temptations of legitimacy on the one hand and overt and covert pressures on the other," which, the article notes, will "definitely appear after the U.S. elections."

A DIFFERENT SPIRIT

This 3,000-page article on pages 14, 15, 16, and 17 is by Menahem Felix and Yosi Pal'i, who call for a reexamination of the issue of Israel's "national identity." Noting that Peres had publicly acknowledged needing the Israeli-Arab vote to win the elections, the article warns that "in a democratic regime such as ours, where the government's source of legitimacy is the people, then clearly a government that requires the support of non-Jews in order to muster a majority is not a Jewish government. A government that is not based on a Jewish majority cannot be the government of the people of Israel." The article goes on to say that the argument that "since a majority of Jews decided to accept any democratic majority, even if based on the votes of non-Jews, any such decision constitutes the will of the Israeli people and 'legitimizes' the government, is casuistic nonsense." Felix and Pal'i assert that "we have reached the point where granting equal voting rights to both Jews and non- Jews may undermine the Jewish nature of the state."

VOICES FROM THE HEIGHTS

This 4,000-word article by Daniyela Sha'ul attempts to analyze the political and psychological reasons for the Golan Heights settlers' surprising support of the Labor party in the elections.

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Lebanon: Israeli Shelling, Overflights Reported in South

NC0108070496 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0335 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Zionist assaults on the south have continued. At dawn today Mazra'at al-Hamra', the al-Litani river basin, and the outskirts of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah were the target of Zionist tank fire whose source was the enemy's positions in Qal'at al-Shaqif. The bombardment was accompanied by machine-gun fire from the enemy's positions in al-Tayyibah that was directed against the al-Litani river basin and the wadis and hills surrounding Yuhmur.

Zionist warplanes flew several sorties over al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah between midnight last night and dawn today, dropping flares particularly over the al-Litani river basin.

Lebanon: Hizballah Terrorist Killed in Security Zone 31 Jul

TA0108074896 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 1 Aug 96 p 2

[Report by Arye O'Sullivan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Hizballah terrorist was killed yesterday during an exchange of fire with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] forces in the security zone, the army said, bringing to four the number of Hizballah gunmen killed in July.

The incident began after Hizballah gunmen fired mortar rounds at an SLA force operating in the northeastern sector of the zone. The SLA and IDF forces returned fire. The IDF spokesman said at least one Hizballah gunman was verified killed and that there were no casualties among the Israeli or SLA forces.

Lebanon: President Al-Hirawi Marks Army Day Anniversary

NC0108104296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0702 GMT 1 Aug 96

[Speech by President Ilyas al-Hirawi at the graduation of army officers at the Military School in al-Fayyadiyah marking army day anniversary; live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Lebanese people, on this anniversary I ought to be frank about the peace process and the liberation of the south and Western al-Biqa'. Our responsibility does not permit us to speak about expectations; rather it calls us to frankly tell you the facts. Let others talk about what they think, speculate, and theorize.

Finalizing a united Arab position in the face of challenges to the peace process is a guarantee for the victory of Arabs' rights and dignity. We welcome the monitoring committee to halt Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon, but this committee is not a political solution. A political solution lies in implementing Resolution 425, calling for Israel's unconditional pullout from our occupied land.

We did not go to Madrid to demand the implementation of Resolution 425. We took part in the Madrid conference out of solidarity with the brothers and proceeding from Lebanon's status as a partner in charting the region's future in its capacity as an effective part of it.

Creating illusions does not make up for borrowed time. Israel is speaking about "Lebanon first". If Israel is convinced that occupation has not guaranteed its security and decides to withdraw from our occupied land, it has no alternative but Resolution 425. Let it implement that resolution and our military and security forces, as well as the UN forces, will maintain security there.

We will not give Israel the opportunity to depict us as if we are the ones opposed to its talk about withdrawal from our occupied land. Let it pull out and we will be guarantors of security there. We will not let Israel take us on separately, in order to impose on us its peace and conditions. Lebanon is for just and comprehensive peace. Lebanon is among its brothers and I say for the last time that it will be the last one to sign a peace deal with Israel.

Israel cannot keep talking about peace on one hand and exercising violence against our kinsfolk there on the other hand, as took place in April. Therefore, the Qana aggression suggests naming our course the sacred Qana.

Israel wants to violate our national sovereignty with impunity. God forbid; only Lebanese solidarity is the one that defends Lebanon. Military personnel, if dying for Lebanon's unity and independence is an honor, we should prove that living united for the sake of this unity and for all of Lebanon is the best life. Long live the army. May you live long. Long live Lebanon. [applause]

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Syria: Al-Asad Sends Cable of Condolences to Clinton

JN3107172096 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 29 Jul 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — SANA — President Hafiz al-Asad sent a cable to U.S. President William Clinton in which he said that he received with deep sorrow the news about the explosion that took place at Atlanta's Olympic Park. He also expressed Syria's denunciation of this crime and of all acts of terrorism. The president also expressed sadness for the victims and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

Syria: U.S., Russia Urged To 'Force' Israel To Meet Peace Needs

JN3107141296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: We do not believe the Israeli prime minister's words about peace can deceive anybody in the world. At a joint news conference with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak yesterday, U.S. President Bill Clinton said there has been no specific commitment from the Israeli Government. Shim'on Peres also said Netanyahu was dreaming and deceiving himself and the Israeli people by seeking peace along with the land. Yes, peace has its own rules, bases, and vocabulary. What Netanyahu says has nothing to do with this language. He who wants peace should translate his words into deeds.

What distinguishes the Israeli Government, however, is that there is no contradiction between its words and deeds. It rejects just and comprehensive peace, the international legitimacy and its resolutions, and the land-for-peace principle. At the same time, it tries to consolidate both settlement and occupation. Therefore, Israel's calls for the resumption of negotiations are a sheer deception and do not even deserve discussion.

Syria, as well as the Arab countries, adopted peace as a strategic option, and their position is welcomed and supported by the world community. World countries and institutions are also unanimous that peace is a condition for security and stability. We cannot talk about security as if it were isolated from peace. The peace that will guarantee security is the one that can be accepted by nations and that will not encroach on their rights and dignity.

By insisting on the peace of the world legitimacy, Syria wants the just and firm peace that can live and continue. It wants the peace that will not relinquish land or dignity and that can restore respect for all parties and the international legitimacy. What Israel is saying and doing not only conflicts with the peace that is required by the world community, it also warns of freezing the peace process or even pushing it into the unknown. This will make the region a hotbed of tension and will reflect negatively on world security and stability.

Syria declares its adherence to just and comprehensive peace and urges the world countries, particularly the United States, Russia, and the other big powers, to shoulder their responsibility and force Israel to meet the requirements of the desired peace. Any talk about security and fighting terrorism without a serious and honest effort to entrench just and comprehensive peace may result in the missing of peace and security opportunity.

Syria: 'Responsible' Sources Deny Secret Meeting With Netanyahu

JN0108112496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1100 GMT 1 Aug 96

[Thana' al-Imam report from Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Responsible Syrian sources denied the Israeli newspaper HA'ARETZ report that a Syrian envoy met with Netanyahu in Israel before the Israeli prime minister left for Washington to meet with U.S. officials.

The sources told Radio Monte Carlo: These reports are untrue. They have never been and will never be realistic. The sources added that everyone knows Syria opposes all secret meetings, pointing out that people's causes, especially those which define their fate, cannot be dealt with in secrecy.

Informed sources consider that the Lebanon-first issue is not fit for discussion in the first place.

Syrian media have continued to denounce such proposals. They carry negative reactions to them daily, considering that they aim to drive a wedge between Syria and Lebanon without real Israeli commitment to returning the territory or implementing Resolution No. 425. Moreover, these proposals are an attempt to decrease the international pressure on Netanyahu, who appeared very adamant and refused to accept peace based on international resolutions when he took over the Israeli premiership in Israel.

Syrian officials have told Dennis Ross that they reject this proposal. Moreover, Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam noted that Syria and Lebanon will not fall into the Israeli traps, which harm the Arab side and give the Israeli side immense gains.

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Syria: AL-THAWRAH Notes 'Contradictions' in Netanyahu's Policy

JN3107124496 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0735 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 31 Jul (SANA)—The newspaper AL-THAWRAH says that the contradictions that characterize Binyamin Netanyahu's policy are beginning to reap the fruits of failure. The newspaper adds that attempts to break the isolation of Israel are beginning to face political pitfalls, noting that the Israeli lobby, which is spread throughout the world, cannot stop the negative repercussions of these political pitfalls for the future of Israel and especially for the present and future of peace.

In an article today written by Dr. Fayiz al-Sayigh, director general of the SYRIAN ARAB NEWS AGENCY, SANA, the newspaper says that the new contradictions and pitfalls into which the Israelis have fallen—as a result of extremism, intransigence, and continuing to cherish naive dreams based on obsolete Zionist ideology—add to the contradictions of a society imbued with ethnic, racial, environmental, social, political, and cultural discrimination. These contradictions mean that the Israeli existence is being founded on these bases and ideologies that have no future. Indeed, they totally conflict with the simplest bases on which societies and countries are founded and contradict the criteria for continued existence.

AL-THAWRAH says that one of the most prominent contradictions is Netanyahu's clinging to the occupied land and the philosophy of Eliyahu Ben-Elisar of keeping this land along with the peace they want with what they say today about Lebanon first.

The newspaper says: The entire world is fed up with these proposals and so are the Lebanese brothers who realized, with a deep national and pan-Arab sense, Israel's objectives behind such proposals, in addition to the well-known objectives of imposing Israeli hegemony over Lebanon, driving a wedge in the Syrian- Lebanese track, as well as other reasons the Israelis believe serve their objectives. Thus, the Israelis are ignoring the fact that Lebanon benefited from the lessons it learned in the past, fortified itself with the results of these lessons, and based its future on the firm and safe foundations of these results.

AL-THAWRAH notes that the enemy—which destroyed southern Lebanon, demolished the houses of its inhabitants, and perpetrated the most heinous massacre of the century in Qana and al-Nabatiyah and other southern Lebanese areas—will not withdraw from southern Lebanon except with the power of the Lebanese stand, which is derived from the cohesion of the Syrian-Lebanese track within the framework of an integrated peace process based on international legitimacy and the need for, or rather the inevitability of, implementing Resolution 425 within the course of a full implementation of other international legitimacy resolutions and the principle of exchanging land for peace and not for anything else.

The newspaper concludes by saying that an unconditional withdrawal is a basic option and the necessary test of seriousness regarding the continuation of the peace process. This is recognized by the entire world—peoples, governments, and international institutions. Without this, peace will remain a hostage to extremism and a victim of intransigence, which must be confronted and referred to the United Nations which, in turn, should do whatever it takes to put the defendant behind bars and issue a verdict against him. The United Nations has made its contribution in more than one similar case.

Syria: Al-Asad Address to Army on 51st Anniversary

JN0108073496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 1 Aug 96

["Text" of message by Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to the Syrian Armed Forces on their 51st anniversary, published in army magazines JAYSH AL-SHA'B and AL-JUNDI AL-'ARABI; date not given — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] My brothers and sons in the Armed Forces, officers, NCOs, and hero soldiers: Since its inception, Army Day has been and will always be the day of the homeland and a cause of pride for the people, who struggled until they established the national army. This army started as a limited force. With the passage of time, it became a valiant force, shouldering the tasks for which it was created at the national and pan-Arab levels. Over the past 50 years, our army fulfilled great tasks in terms of defending Syria and the Arab land whenever it was asked to do so.

On the 51st anniversary of the Syrian Arab Army, I greet you and congratulate you on your day. You are constantly on my mind. I follow your efforts, your progress, and your acquisition of more strength and expertise. I am proud of your infinite struggle. I appreciate what you achieve in the field of training and the national and pan-Arab tasks you undertake.

On this glorious day, it is my pleasure to greet you and express my deep love for you all, brothers and sons, in the land, air, and naval forces. I urge you to make more efforts, while admitting that you have never fallen

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short of doing this. I urge you to be more prepared, while aware that you have never hesitated to make preparations. I urge you to be more intent on achieving the edge in all areas of military expertise.

We withstood many hardships over the past years. We also encountered Arab circumstances, which I do not want to detail now, as they are well known to you, to our people, and to the Arab nation. These circumstances were created by the ambitions of Zionism in the Arab land. They were aggravated by the countries that supported these ambitions politically and with financial and military assistance. We overcame difficulties and remained steadfast in the harsh circumstances. We made the best of our efforts in coordination with our brothers in order to remove the negative factors that plagued pan-Arab action. These factors were the causes of the deterioration that afflicted the Arab position for some time. We have never lost hope, as the faithful and strugglers never come to despair. We have never lost hope as we are the owners of a just cause. We and our nation possess elements of power that nurture hope and optimism in ourselves.

The sincere efforts we and the Arab brothers made led to an Arab summit conference that revived joint Arab action, awakened the Arab nation, and reunited Arab ranks. The summit also decided to employ the nation's energy in protecting its interests, liberating the occupied lands, restoring usurped rights, and drawing up the sound path for the attainment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

A just and comprehensive peace that puts an end to aggression, ends occupation, and gives rights to their owners is a noble target we sought to achieve both sincerely and honestly. Anyone in the world, particularly those connected with the peace process, will be wrong if he thinks this policy might at any time mean the relinquishment of our constants. The one who seeks peace must tread the path of right and justice. This is the path that leads to peace, brings security, and provides a climate of economic and social development for future generations—a climate of peace that is free of all acts of violence and tension. Anyone who refuses to follow this path is an enemy of peace and, consequently, a mortal enemy of all noble principles and values and of all mankind.

Brothers and sons, our determination is strong and will not weaken. Our steadfastness is firm and will not lose its vigor. Our heroic army will continue to be the true guard and brave defender of the homeland. The leadership will continue to provide the army with whatever increases its strength and bolsters its combat capabilities. Our impregnable national unity will continue to be the firm basis for our victorious march, the march of pride and dignity.

On this glorious day, I extend affection and warmest greetings to our steadfast people in the beloved Golan, affirming to them that we will be reunited no matter how long it takes. I also extend affection and warmest greetings to our steadfast brothers under occupation in every Arab land where the Israeli occupation is continuing. We renew the pledge to our righteous martyrs, who were fairly described as the most generous and most noble among people, that we will continue to follow the path they pursued with courage, sacrifice, and pure blood.

Once again I congratulate you, brothers and sons, heroes of our army. I greet your families and wish you and your families a happy life. With God's help and through the loyalty of our people and your efforts, we will continue to be strong and proud, determined to liberate the occupied Arab territories in order to attain a just and comprehensive peace in our region.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate JAYSH AL-SHA'B, through which I am addressing this message to our armed forces—along with its sister magazine AL-JUNDI AL-'ARABI—on its Golden Jubilee. This sedate magazine has accomplished its tasks in the most perfect manner as an information medium for the Armed Forces. It expressed the orientations of the leadership and political administration. It strengthened the determination of the hero fighters with its articles and other items. I also greet the magazine's editorial staff and workers as well as those who preceded them in running and editing the magazine. I appreciate all your efforts, wishing you a happy life. Peace be upon you.

[Signed] General Hafiz al-Asad, president of the republic and commander in chief of the Army and Armed Forces

Syria: Gen Al-Shihabi Interviewed on Peace Process, Likud Stands

JN3107185796 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 30 Jul 96 p 3

[Interview with General Hikmat al-Shihabi, chief of staff of the Syrian Army and Armed Forces, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-BA'TH] Every year on this cherished anniversary, 1 August, we meet with you to discuss the significance of the founding and development of the Syrian Arab Army, the shield of the homeland and the nation. Last year, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of our Army. This is not only an opportunity for discussion, it is also a

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moment for us to take pride in the level of integration, preparedness, and development our Armed Forces have achieved in the ideological and combat domains. At the outset, we are pleased to convey to AL-BA'TH readers what you have to say about the launching of our valiant Army on this great anniversary.

[Al-Shihabi] This national anniversary is cherished by all Arabs. It is common knowledge that Syria was the first Arab country to win independence. The founding of the Army was the first major step toward asserting national will and forcing the colonialists to evacuate. This Army's record for the last 50 years is full of heroism and sacrifices in all the nation's battles, especially in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Everybody testifies that our Syrian Arab Army has truly been a school for heroes, through preparedness, training, and the battles it has fought — especially the October war of liberation. In all its stands and battles, the Syrian Army has embodied the will of the Arab nation and people to regain their land and rights and preserve their dignity, independence, and sovereignty. Thus, it is the nation's shield and bulwark.

Since its early stages in the 1940's, our Army has been a symbol of the will of our people and an embodiment of the great ambitions and aspirations of our masses. Today, our Army is one of the modern and strong armies, thanks to the great care of President Hafiz al-Asad, who sought to make the Armed Forces advanced and modernized in their hardware, methods of training and guidance, and political indoctrination.

[AL-BA'TH] The 1 August anniversary this year comes in the wake of important developments, especially regarding the peace talks, and the Arab summit that was held in Cairo. How do you view these developments and the issue of peace? Is there anything new, especially in the aftermath of the recent stands and statements of the Likud government in Israel?

[Al-Shihabi] In light of international changes, there must be some positive and negative developments every now and then. This will not affect our principled positions, however. In principle, as President Hafiz al-Asad said, Syria supports a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace in the region. Syria agreed to attend a peace conference in the Middle East in the early 1970's. Also, after the October war of liberation, Syria agreed to Resolution 338 and Resolution 242. We all remember that a conference was held in Geneva in 1973 on the basis of Resolution 338.

Five years ago, Syria responded to the peace initiative launched by the U.S. Administration based on these foundations and the fact that peace will return rights and the land occupied since 5 June 1967 to their owners, especially since Resolution 242 stipulates the inadmissibility of the occupation of others' territory by force. This stipulation is even stronger than the land-for-peace principle, which Netanyahu is trying to avoid by claiming that he has his own interpretation of the bases of the peace process. This talk is totally rejected. Canceling the land-for-peace principle means canceling the peace process and will lead to its total collapse.

From this premise, Syria attended the Madrid conference and the other sessions of negotiations in the wake of the conference and showed great cooperation with the cosponsors of the peace process. Syria has always been eager to achieve tangible progress in this field, because such a peace — in accordance with these requirements — is the one that secures the restoration of the occupied land and the Palestinian Arab people's legitimate rights, particularly their right to self-determination. This peace will also safeguard dignity, security, and stability for all.

Therefore, Syria's peace stand is clear. It is simultaneously a principled and strategic stand. However, Israel is the side that procrastinated, aggressed, placed obstacles, and set conditions that will not achieve equitable [mutakafi'ah] and balanced [mutawazinah] security arrangements. Of course, we reject this.

We do not accept any kind of concessions or any kind of bargaining. I said this to AL-BA'TH on this occasion last year, and I repeat it now: Syria believes that the peace battle is as important as the military battle. It will not allow Israel to achieve through peaceful negotiations what it failed to achieve militarily and through aggression against the Arab land. Syria will not give up an inch of its land and will only agree to an honorable peace that the people will accept and the Arab nation will support.

We repeat what His Excellency President al-Asad said in his address to the Armed Forces on the 1 August anniversary: Those who know how to defend their homeland in the battlefield also know how to defend it in the peace arena.

[AL-BA'TH] In spite of the Israeli prime minister's statements that the Israelis want peace, the signs are not that encouraging. In this case, what options will the Arabs have?

[Al-Shihabi] As I said, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has always stressed that Syria seeks a just peace, that we are peace advocates — not people who enjoy killing and destruction. We are responsible for our own stands, not those of the other party.

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It goes without saying that there is a real threat as long as Israel does not work seriously for peace.

Our cause is just and clear. We seek peace with all the legitimate means, including diplomatic means. Any other option will be part of these means if they are imposed on us. For decades, we had only the military option to confront Israeli aggression against the Arab territories, against our Arab people inside and outside the occupied territories, and against the areas adjacent to these territories.

However, efforts were made on all levels during the height of the battles. It is no secret that President al-Asad used to fight on two fronts: diplomatic and military. The world always used to condemn aggression. However, Israel continued to defy international public opinion and UN resolutions.

In any case, we were not alone in battle. The entire Arab masses supported us. Syria has always been the precursor in sincerely calling for effective Arab solidarity. Syria continues to call for this. Now it stresses the importance of enhancing the Cairo summit resolutions by consolidating the Arab position to confront moves that are hostile to the Arabs and by bolstering joint Arab action to attain a just and lasting peace in the region based on the peace process principles and the international legitimacy resolutions that will return the Arab territories and the usurped Arab rights to their owners.

[AL-BA'TH] It is widely known that the Syrian Arab Army is the Arab nation's army and is upholding the Arab cause. How is this slogan translated into concrete realities?

[Al-Shihabi] This slogan is translated into concrete realities in all its dimensions. Since the beginning, the Syrian Arab Army has defended the Palestine question, which is our paramount cause. It has waged battles and offered martyrs to uphold this cause. Likewise, this Army rose up to vindicate the Arab people during the tripartite aggression against fraternal Egypt. Moreover, it took the lead in protecting and supporting the Palestinian resistance. It hastened to enter Lebanese territory in 1976 in response to a request by the legitimate Lebanese Government and the appeals for assistance by the Arab people in fraternal Lebanon. When Israel attacked Lebanon in 1982, our Armed Forces alone confronted the entire Israeli war machine, which was equipped with the most up-to- date technology. In this showdown, our forces proved that they had thoroughly learned the lessons of the October liberation war and had gone beyond that to acquire greater combat capabilities and boost their morale. Our Army will remain the Arab nation's army. As such, it will continue to vindicate its just causes.

[AL-BA'TH] There is no doubt that our Armed Forces have made large and significant strides in terms of the readiness, training, and high level of preparedness they have achieved. Can you tell us more about this?

[Al-Shihabi] Syria has made great efforts and enormous sacrifices to achieve this national and pan-Arab goal. The instructions of leader al-Asad regarding training and the provision of arms and ammunition have been implemented without delay. We have accorded great attention to the issue of training, based on the assumption that individuals are the crucial element in any battle. Hence, our military personnel have undergone indoctrination, morale-related instruction, and combat-preparedness training. Of course, we have not forgotten about ensuring the availability of arms and sophisticated technology.

Our Armed Forces have enjoyed a high level of preparedness in all aspects. The Syrian soldier is a fighter imbued with a doctrine and faith and equipped with sophisticated weapons. He is proud of all this. He works under the canopy of the wise and courageous leadership of the great Arab leader Hafiz al-Asad, who accords his sons every possible care and attention and harbors the greatest possible affection for them. What remains to be said is that regardless of the high-tech and sophisticated equipment an army has, the human element remains the crucial element. Undoubtedly, we have made a great and qualitative leap in the modernization of our Armed Forces since the inception of the blessed Corrective Movement under His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad. This has been achieved through the restructuring of the Armed Forces in order to upgrade their capabilities and provide them with greater mobility. The political leadership played a crucially important and vigorous role in promoting the indoctrination and combat preparedness of the Armed Forces at the same time. This indoctrination is going hand in hand with the combat preparedness through the instruction provided at academies, institutes, and specialized schools, and also through the qualification of the commanders and technical personnel needed by the various classes of our ground forces, our air force, and our naval forces. The Syrian Arab Army is characterized by the high competence in organization and discipline.

The 50th anniversary of the Syrian Arab Army provides the occasion to speak about how far our Armed Forces have gone in these areas. Throughout this march, not a year has passed without qualitative leaps to promote the capabilities and resources of these forces. On the 50th anniversary of our Army, we have made pronouncements that are still very much alive. These pronouncements are:

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We reiterate that we will continue to perform our sacred national task so that our Armed Forces may continue to enjoy the highest possible level of preparedness and perform in the best possible manner.

The leader president said: "Our freedom is proportionate with the power we have. Likewise, our strength is proportionate with the freedom we enjoy. The people who do not have a strong army cannot guarantee that their independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity will remain intact. Our Army is the protector of our land and the fence of our homeland. The extent of its preparedness and readiness determine the scope of the peace, security, and stability we enjoy."

[AL-BA'TH] Civil wars, regional wars, and wars between neighboring countries are increasing in several parts of the world. Yet, the changes that have swept the world show that the individual of the late 20th century will see a different picture regarding military disputes among big powers and world allies. Do you believe the world will move from armed conflict to other kinds of conflict?

[Al-Shihabi] We are monitoring the changes that have taken place all over the world. These changes have affected many aspects of the balance under which the world has lived since World War II. These changes also affected world stability and created new facts that have not yet crystallized. So, armament programs in the East and the West are under way, and billions of dollars are allocated to them.

The picture of the present and the future cannot be put into a clear-cut category. The history of nations and the laws of human nature, however, require other aspects of balance and another type of stability, although nations' security, rights, territories, and freedom are being threatened.

Our Arab nation, which has large human resources and economic and military power is required to explore its role in these changes and future prospects.

So, our Army remains a forward force of our people in all the confrontations imposed on it. It is the Army that defends and protects the homeland and its wealth from the covetous. The leader president said in his last year's speech on Army Day that the Army achieved most of its goal under the canopy of the 8 March revolution, became the nation's ideological Army, developed its weapons, and strengthened the values and traditions, which are derived from our nation's genuine history and the principles of our great party, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party.

This Army did not hesitate to shoulder its responsibility, to defend the homeland, and to wage battle after battle to protect the cause of the Arab nation, the Palestine question. We are also proud of the fact that most Syrian families offered martyrs to the cause.

[AL-BA'TH] You defined five basic peace trends last year. Are they still the same?

[Al-Shihabi] We always adopt principled positions. This is why Syria responded to the peace initiative. The bases of negotiations we declared in the past will remain the same.

1. Syria rejected secret talks because it has nothing to hide.

2. Incomplete peace based on unilateral deals cannot last. We reject it now and will reject it in the future.

3. We will not accept any peace that will relinquish a single grain of sand, that is not honorable, and that will not achieve dignity and sovereignty.

4. Security is linked to peace. Security arrangements are not an alternative to total withdrawal, and the security of one party should not be at the expense of another party.

5. Israel's total withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines cannot be subject to bargaining.

These are the clear principles for the peace process, which Israel is still obstructing, and Netanyahu's government these days is using the pretext of the so-called preconditions. Do the principles of the peace process and international legitimacy mean preconditions?

I may also add that Netanyahu's arguments on giving priority to security over peace and to Israel's security over the security of all people, and even at the expense of all people, are rejected and contradict the principles of the peace process. They will eventually cause the collapse of the process, send everything back to square one, and reintroduce the turmoil of wars, violence, and tension in the region.

[AL-BA'TH] How do you view our national unity, which is evident across the homeland?

[Al-Shihabi] National unity in Syria is a model that should be emulated. This cohesive unity, which is symbolized by the National Progressive Front, is the basic element that makes Syria's al-Asad stand fast in the face of all the problems the country may face. Syria, as the leader president has said, "stands firm on the positions of justice and opposes unfairness. The principle for our steadfastness is our national unity, which is growing stronger and firmer over the years. Our Army will remain as we have always known it to be over the years — the faithful watchman which

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defends the homeland — and it draws its strengthen from the strength of our people who reject submission and humiliation."

We embody our national unity as we stand united in the battles for liberation and construction under this stability, which we have been enjoying since the launch of the blessed Corrective Movement over a quarter of a century ago.

[AL-BA'TH] Last November, we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the blessed Corrective Movement. How do you assess this blessed march on the level of our valiant armed forces?

[Al-Shihabi] One has so much to say in this regard and on the great construction drive in Syria. The blessed Corrective Movement considered the development of our Armed Forces a top priority to make them arrive at this level of high preparedness. Our Army is truly the Army of the people.

Since the launch of the blessed Corrective Movement, the leader president has been giving great attention, care, and guidance to our armed forces to develop their capability and improve their structure, both in human and military terms; that is, to develop the individual and secure effective weapons. While modernizing these forces, we had to take major and basic steps. The structure of these forces had to be organized in order to make them more effective and improve their ability to act. We saw the fruits of that development in the October war of liberation and its achievements on the military levels, its great acts of heroism, and the effective cooperation among the various Army corps. Thus, our Army rose to the level that befits its status as the Army of the country and the nation.

[AL-BA'TH] Do you wish to say one last word on this occasion?

[Al-Shihabi] On this blessed occasion, which is dear to all of us, I extend congratulations to the great leader, President Hafiz al-Asad, on my own behalf and on behalf of my brothers in the armed forces. We pledge to his excellency that we will continue to fulfill our national and pan-Arab role as good as we can under his historic, wise, and courageous leadership.

On this great day, I also extend my congratulations to my brothers and sons the officers, the noncommissioned officers, and soldiers in the various corps, in the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

We continue to fulfill our tasks with our heads high. We declare that we are proud of the duty that we are entrusted to fulfill, and we pledge to continue the march until all the objectives of our nation are achieved.

Syria: AL-THAWRAH Hails Army on 51st Anniversary

JN0108093896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0455 GMT 1 Aug 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "The Nation's Army," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH comments on the 51st anniversary of the Syrian Arab Army. It says that Syria, led by President Hafiz al-Asad, stands on solid ground as it enters the political battle— the battle of peace—with the same might, efficiency, and skill with which it went to war, and with unwavering national and pan-Arab positions that are no less courageous than those adopted on the battlefields.

AL-THAWRAH writes about the heritage of struggle of our Syrian Arab Army—a heritage that is filled with examples of heroism and glories. It asserts that entering the battles of honor and glory made our valiant Armed Forces a heroic-building establishment, a school of Arabism, and an infinite source of martyrs. It says: This is the truth of our valiant army, which includes, as leader President al-Asad said, those men who combined courage with the technical capability and readiness to offer sacrifices—men who vowed that they will move only forward and believed in their slogan "martyrdom or victory."

AL-THAWRAH says: This is leader al-Asad's national school, which helped the people and the army form a well-founded national unity based on the homeland's ideology and the nation's values—values of magnanimity, manhood, chivalry, right, and justice. It adds: The heroic army's victories and firm and courageous stand in the first struggle trench—as the nation's fighting vanguard—are the result of strong national unity and a lofty national edifice under leader al-Asad, the symbol of pride and dignity.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: This prompts us to emphasize that the anniversary of our brave army will remain a cause of self-confidence and optimism toward the future, which leader al-Asad said is ours, because we are seekers of right and peace. We greet and appreciate our audacious army on its anniversary. We express full pride in and appreciation for the leader of our people's march, the great symbol of the nation, struggler President Hafiz al-Asad.

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Syria: 'Inseparability' of Syria, Lebanon Tracks Emphasized

JN3107154996 Damascus SYRIA TIMES in English 29 Jul 96 p 5

[Editorial by M. Agha: "'Divide and rule'!"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Arab League and Lebanon have stressed the inseparability of the Lebanese and Syria tracks in the peace process at a time when the Israeli government is attempting to undermine relationship through putting forward some proposals that run counter to the bases of the just and comprehensive peace settlement.

The Arab League has reaffirmed its support for Syria and Lebanon's stands and called the Israelis to abide by the UN resolutions and the land for peace principle.

In the meantime, Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz reaffirmed that the inseparability of the Lebanese and Syrian tracks is a strategic option taken by the two brotherly countries. For this, Lebanon has strongly rejected Netanyahu government's statement on withdrawal from Lebanon first.

Lebanon has also rejected all Israeli attempts to break the unity of Syria-Lebanon tracks.

Netanyahu's government, like former Israeli governments, has rejected to abide by UN Resolution 425 and continued its overt war against the Lebanese people to destabilize the situation in this Arab country on the one hand and to threaten Syria's security on the other!!!

The question is: Why does Israel put forward this plan of "Lebanon first"? And why isn't it both Lebanon and Syria? Why isn't it just and comprehensive peace on all the fronts???

Real peace is the peace sought by all the Arabs and backed by the world community including the two cosponsors of the Mideast peace process, the US and Russia.

This peace is actually the strongest in its foundation and bases and the real guarantee for building up a stable and secure region free of violence and violations of human rights.

Netanyahu's government has repeatedly declared the it will not withdraw from the Golan, South Lebanon, or the West Bank including Jerusalem, and that it will never stop settlement building.

Following the increase of world condemnations, Netanyahu's government began to pretend that it is flexible, and put forward its plan on "Lebanon first"!!! It seeks to fool the world that it cares for peace at a time when it still rejects to declare commitment to UN resolutions.

Syria and Lebanon have always demanded the implementation of Resolutions 242, 338, 425 and the land for peace principle while Israel still rejects the international legitimacy resolutions which provide for full withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to self determination and statehood.

In short, Israel wants to perpetuate the occupation of Arab lands through dividing the Arab ranks thereby dominating the whole region.

It is the old colonialist plan of "divide and rule" which Israel still clings to.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Prime Minister, UN Envoy Comment on Peace Process

LD3107202396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto 0730 GMT 31 Jul 96 to Afghanistan

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Brother Golboddin Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, on 30 July met Norbert Holl, the UN secretary general's special envoy to Afghanistan.

The press office of the prime minister's reports that during this meeting Holl first spoke about his mission in Afghanistan and said: I, as the envoy of the United Nations and as representative of the people of Germany, warmly welcome the recent changes in Afghanistan, and hope that the Taleban agree to a cease-fire in the environs of Kabul city as soon as possible.

Holl added that in order to seek a peaceful solution [words indistinct] in the current circumstances is to begin negotiations between all sides.

Brother Hekmatyar, prime minister of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, spoke on the political and military situation in the country and said that the United Nations should have a practical plan for the settlement of the Afghan issue. He said: As far as we are concerned, we are in favor of urgent restoration of peace and an immediate end to war. However, there still exist some forces that insist on the continuation of war in the country. Whereas what they might be able to achieve through understanding could never be achieved by war and bloodshed. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan: UN Envoy Criticizes Taleban Rocket Attacks on Kabul

LD3107195796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1439 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Norbert Holl, the UN secretary general's special envoy, has criticized the Taleban for firing rockets [on Kabul] during his stay in the Afghan capital.

According to BAKHTAR, Holl, who was speaking at a news conference today at the end of his visit to Kabul, added that the Taleban action toward him, as a guest, was insulting.

He said the most effective way to reach positive results in the settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan is to insist on negotiations with the warring sides inside Afghanistan. The UN delegation also plans to study the views of the warring sides and of the public and to (?include them) in a peace plan acceptable to all sides. He stressed, however, that an immediate cease-fire is the first necessary step in any peace attempt.

Answering a question from a reporter, Mr. Holl said: It is strongly (?thought) in the UN that foreign interference [words indistinct]. The UN special envoy added that he will transfer his office to Kabul, which is the capital of Afghanistan and the center of the country's unity.

Holl, who continually spoke of his friendly relations with the Afghans, said these could prove effective in his efforts to settle the conflict in Afghanistan.

According to experts, Mr. Holl's familiarity with Afghan mojahedin and refugees since his (?time) in the German Foreign Ministry, the experience of Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri's mission, and his knowledge of the situation in Afghanistan are some of the factors which could pave the way for the success of his mission. It is up to Mr. Holl how he uses this experience in the interest of restoring peace in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: Government, Dostam Forces Clash; Many Civilians Killed

BK3107110396 Hong Kong AFP in English 1040 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Report by Marc Lavine]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, July 31 (AFP) — Fierce fighting is raging in northern Afghanistan between Kabul government troops and the forces of warlord General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, officials and sources said here Wednesday [31 July].

The intense clashes between Dostam's men and soldiers loyal to president Borhanoddin Rabbani's top military commander, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, have been on for a week, sources from the area said.

"Fighting has been extremely heavy all week and continued late into Tuesday [30 July] night," a government source said here.

"Scores of civilians and several soldiers have been killed in the fighting which has shown no signs of calming down yet," he added.

Dostam, who controls the northern part of this factionally-divided country, ordered more than 40 aerial bombing raids to be carried out in the two bordering strife-torn districts of Saripul province, he added.

Heavy weapons were being used by both sides — which have not fought each other for more than a year — to pound each other's positions in the area, which lies about 120 kilometers (75 miles) southwest of the

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Dostam's "capital" at Mazar-e Sharif, another official said.

Independent sources from the area confirmed that fighting was raging between the two sides for a week, with casualities on both sides and among civilians in the area.

The fighting broke out after Mas'ud's forces in attempted to extend their political influence in the area, an act which Dostam saw as provocative, government and independent sources said.

"Dostam attacked the two districts as he felt threatened by Mas'ud's forces attempts to expand their organisational set-ups in the north," a source told AFP.

"The pockets inside Dostam's area could be used by commanders to try and lure Dostam's commanders over to the government side, which would obviously make Dostam nervous," he added.

The clashes in Kohestanat and Sanjarak districts — government-held pockets within Dostam's territory — could deal a serious blow to relations between him and Kabul, which is attempting to woo the northern leader, analysts said.

Dostam's party has reportedly been holding talks with the government, which is desperately trying to broaden its base by attracting other factional leaders.

"Perhaps the government was trying to put pressure on Dostam to come into the administration by boosting its presence and possibly its forces in the north," one analyst said.

The north of Afghanistan is largely controlled by Dostam's forces, but the area is also covered by a complex patchwork of pockets of troops loyal to other factions.

Isolated flare-ups between the various groups occur in the area regularly and it is not yet clear whether the latest clashes could have an influence on Afghanistan's nascent peace process, observers said.

Former opposition leader Golboddin Hekmatyar joined the government as prime minister a month ago, ending years of hostility between his and president Borhanoddin Rabbani's troops.

The move has prompted intense speculation and anticipation of other opposition groups switching sides and joining the interim coalition government.

The former mojahedin factions have been battling each other for power here since they helped topple the last communist government here in 1992.

India

India: Gujral on Affects of PRC Nuclear Test Amidst CTBT Talks

BK0108115896 Madras THE HINDU in English 1 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Minister for External Affairs, Mr. I.K. Gujral, told the Lok Sabha today that continued testing by nuclear powers, even as the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] negotiations were in progress, clearly indicated that these countries were not willing to give up their nuclear arsenals and regarded the CTBT "merely as a non-proliferation measure." More importantly, he said, such testing programmes "inevitably give rise to questions relating to India's national security."

Mr. Gujral declared that the Government was fully conscious of the evolving security situation and would take "all steps necessary to enable us to cope with any threat that may be posed to the security of India." He specifically mentioned the latest nuclear test by China and firmly demarcated India's position from those "leading" countries which had sought to draw comfort from the fact that after this test China would join other nuclear weapon States in observing a moratorium on such testing.

"On our part we are dismayed by the nuclear tests carried out by nuclear weapon States, particularly as the CTBT negotiations are in progress. We have always believed that these tests take the world further away from the goal of universal nuclear disarmament," the Minister said in a suo motu statement on the Chinese nuclear test and the CTBT.

Pointing out that since 1945 five nuclear weapon States had carried out 2047 tests, he said these had contributed to the nuclear arms race and showed that partial steps did not lead to nuclear disarmament. Reiterating India's position that it would not sign the CTBT in its present form, he said the approach taken by it called for a "genuinely comprehensive CTBT" leading to the elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

"Ongoing testing programmes, whether at test sites or in laboratories, are clear indications that the nuclear weapon States are not willing to give up their reliance on their nuclear arsenals and consider the CTBT merely as a nonproliferation measure," Mr. Gujral argued.

Mr. Gujral referred to his meetings with the Foreign Ministers of several countries during the ASEAN Regional Forum and Post Ministerial Conference in Jakarta

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last week and said that they appreciated India's viewpoint. Indonesia's Foreign Minister, in particular, shared India's perception "both about the goal of achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world as well as the need to ensure that the CTBT brought an end to vertical proliferation."

At the ongoing conference in Geneva too, India's stand had been appreciated by many countries. Several nonaligned nations agreed with India that the present formulation on "Entry-into-Force" was without precedent in treaty negotiating practice. "Yet, these countries find it difficult to accept our proposals to modify the draft treaty text because of the rigid position adopted by a small number of countries," he told the House.

Mr. Gujral made it clear that India would not accept any language in the draft treaty text which would impose an obligation on it, directly or indirectly. "If there are attempts to push forward such a text, we will have to oppose such efforts. We continue to remain engaged in the negotiations in Geneva in order that our national interests are fully safeguarded," he concluded.

The statement set the tone for a discussion on the CTBT initiated by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. During the two hour inconclusive debate, there was widespread appreciation of India's stand and the only discordant note was struck by the BJP whose main speaker, Lt. Gen. (retd) S.P.M. Tripathi described India's nuclear policy as "escapist and ambivalent." He said that India was "isolated" on the issue and had lost a lot of ground because of its "negative" stand. He urged India to exercise its nuclear option and said that every time his party raised the issue the response was that this was not the "right time." "What is the definition of right time?" he asked contending that time had come for India to "go for a bomb."

The former Union Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun (Congress-I), just fled India's position and said that there was no question of India signing the CTBT unless and until its "promoters" agreed to total universal disarmament. He suggested that the House unanimously adopt a resolution declaring India's stand on the issue.

A similar suggestion was later made by his party colleague Mr. Prithvi Raj Chauhan. He said that the House should sent out a "clear message" to the world that India was united on the matter. From the CPI(M) [Communist Party India (Marxist)], Mr. Rupchand Pal supported India's policy and said it represented a national consensus.

India: Article Says Refusal To Sign CTBT Not To Affect U.S. Ties

BK0108110296 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 31 Jul 96 p 3

[Article by Pramit Pal Chaudhuri]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India began by co-sponsoring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Then, it said it would not sign the treaty but the rest of the world could go ahead. Now it has said it will not sign and will not allow anyone else to do so.

Assuming its promise to use its veto is New Delhi's final CTBT stance, it is time to pen obituaries for the first attempt at a post-Cold War arms control agreement.

The CTBT is likely to become diplomatic driftwood. Without a consensus it will go from the Geneva conference on disarmament to the United Nations General Assembly not as a treaty but as a resolution.

Countries will vote for and against, and then forget. At best, it will be put up for renegotiation. Countries will talk for and against, and gradually forget.

India hardened its position following last week's meeting between the Indian external affairs minister, Mr I.K. Gujral, and his United States counterpart, Mr Warren Christopher, in Jakarta.

According to US newspapers, Washington has decided that raiher than press ahead with the CTBT without India, the US will wait for India to come around at some future date. Presumably this was told to Gujral whereupon New Delhi decided to completely scuttle the treaty.

India's sabotage of the CTBT will do no major damage to relations with the US. As the US ambassador made clear, India's CTBT stance would not trigger sanctions.

When India first said it would not sign the US response was: "All right, we'll just go along without you." Now India has said it will allow no one to sign, the US will just wait.

The US is interested in the CTBT because of domestic politics not national security. The Clinton Administration took up the CTBT to help secure re-election in November. The CTBT was strongly opposed by Ronald Reagan and George Bush. If the Republicans win in November it is likely the US will oppose it again.

The reason is obvious. The US nuclear arsenal is a head and shoulders above all the rest. Only Russia is at par. China's bombs are an atomic stone age axe. London and Paris are boys with toy guns. The US is the only country which can develop and deploy a new generation

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of nuclear weapons. This would leave Russia behind. Militarily the US has no incentive to curb testing.

The countries that want a CTBT, which includes all the official and unofficial nuclear powers, are the middle rankers, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France.

Moscow in particular wants a CTBT to stop the US from developing new weapons. Also Russia and China look upon India as a potential security threat and see no reason to sign a treaty which India has refused. Note that India's CTBT stance evoked the most abuse not from Americans but from Russian and Britain's delegates at Geneva.

India will suffer because of its stance at Geneva. But it is not Washington, but others ranging from environmentalists and India's old friend, Russia, who will throw the mud.

India: Article—Nuclear Disarmament in 'Imagination'

BK0108113496 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 1 Aug 96 p 10

[Article by K. Subrahmanyam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Western propaganda which has successfully influenced large sections of the world's population, including a significant number of intellectuals in developing countries, would have us all believe that the end of the Cold War has led to considerable progress in disarmament and that we are moving steadily towards the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. It is widely advertised that the nuclear weapon stockpiles of the US and Russia are being brought down from around 25,000 to 2,500-4,000 (according to their claims). Therefore, a definite trend towards disarmament is claimed to have been established.

No Two Opinions

There can be no two opinions that the end of the Cold War persuaded the nuclear weapon powers to make adjustments and rationalisations in their arsenals. The origin of this move goes back to the Reagan-Gorbachev declaration of November 1985 at the Geneva summit that a nuclear war could not be won and therefore should not be initiated. Following that joint declaration came the intermediate nuclear forces elimination and START I agreements. After the attempted coup in Moscow in August 1991, the US went in for a unilateral renunciation of most of its tactical nuclear weapons followed by a reciprocal gesture by the Soviet Union. START II was signed between the US and Russia during President George Bush's visit to Moscow in 1993.

These reductions were not disarmament measures aimed at total elimination of nuclear weapons. While Mr Gorbachev's Soviet Union came out clearly in favour of a nuclear weapon-free world, Mr Yeltsin's Russia has gone back on that goal. China alone has consistently favoured elimination of nuclear weapons as its ultimate goal and even China insists on maintaining its nuclear arsenal so long as there are other such arsenals in the world.

The only binding declaration for nuclear disarmament is Article VI in the Non-proliferation Treaty which came into force in 1970, 26 years ago. That article stated, "Each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." This solemn commitment which is in the main text of the treaty has been completely disregarded by the nuclear weapon powers. India's efforts to secure a renewed commitment to nuclear disarmament as part of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty have been totally rejected.

The World Court in its recent judgment on the legality of use and threat of use of nuclear weapons has declared unanimously that Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is a binding commitment on nuclear weapon powers. But the US, the UK, France and Russia had already declared in their submissions before the World Court that they did not consider themselves bound by any judgment of the International Court of Justice on this issue. On the other hand, the US official documents and pronouncements have asserted that the US would need nuclear weapons for the next 50 years and beyond. Even those groups of former nuclear arsenal-builders and nuclear theologians who claim to have undergone a conversion to the concept of a nuclear weapon free world caveat their vision of the last stage of nuclear disarmament with a very meaningful clause "in so far as is feasible". In other words, there is no worthwhile group of advocates of nuclear disarmament in the western world. Even those anti-nuclear lobbies which waged serious campaigns when they felt there were serious risks of nuclear war between nuclear weapon powers are today much less active since they are reassured that there are no risks of nuclear wars among the industrialised nations.

Arms Control

The last document among the nuclear weapon powers which made a reference to nuclear disarmament was the Zorin-McCloy set of principles laid down in 1963. Thereafter, the entire framework has been arms control.

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Today the four nuclear weapon powers (China being an exception) feel they have been successful with nuclear arms control. The reductions in the enormous stockpiles amounting to more than 25,000 on each side and their proposed reductions to around 7,000 are not parts of disarmament programmes but arms control which will reduce the risks of nuclear wars among themselves and still permit them to use nuclear weapons as a currency of international power. This has been done mainly because the nuclear weapon powers realise they cannot fight a nuclear war among themselves. They are also discarding obsolete weapons of the fifties and sixties and tactical weapons which were deployed in a dangerously exposed manner. Such rationalisations in nuclear arsenals have been carried out earlier when the Polaris and then Poseidon submarines and first and second generation land based missiles were discarded. In the seventies, the US used to claim that they had unilaterally reduced the explosive yield of their warheads. They did that since the more modernised warheads were compact and accurate with lesser explosive yields and it had nothing to do with disarmament.

Even now, the US, Russia, Britain and France do not claim to have carried out any disarmament at all. It is only the apologists of nuclear weapon powers in the developing world who try to project the rationalisation and streamlining of nuclear arsenals as great steps forward in disarmament. Today the theology of nuclear weapon powers is that the nuclear weapons are not expected to be used for war fighting among nuclear weapon powers. Their role is mostly to intimidate non-nuclear weapon nations. Therefore, they are not willing to give a no first use pledge to non-nuclear weapon nations which is caveat free. Their negative security assurance says they will not use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon nation so long as their territories their armed forces and those of their allies are not attacked. It does not clarify that nuclear weapons will not be used if their forces are counter attacked when they launch an offensive against a non-nuclear weapon nation. More recently, the US defence secretary has told the Senate that the US reserves the right of retaliating with nuclear weapons any attacks with chemical and biological weapons.

It is against this arms control framework that the espousal of the so-called Comprehensive Test Ban by nuclear weapon powers has to be assessed. It is not part of a step-by-step approach to any nuclear disarmament and the nuclear weapon powers have not spelt out any such approach nor have they committed themselves to nuclear disarmament even at some distant period of time. The CTBT is meant to prevent any new nuclear weapon power from emerging and even in that respect the US has no confidence that the treaty will ensure that. This is clear from the enormous US investment in men, materials and efforts in counter proliferation strategy. It is also an attempt at freezing the Chinese nuclear weapon capability at its present technological level.

Another Step

The indefinite and unconditional extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty was the enforced acknowledgment extorted from the international community on the hegemonism of nuclear weapon powers over the rest of the world and legitimisation of their nuclear arsenals. The CTBT is yet another step to make the international community pay obeisance to the overlordship of the nuclear weapon powers and swear their own perpetual servitude to the nuclear five. The prospects of an ongoing nuclear disarmament are only in the imagination of those willing to suspend their disbelief and be reconciled to accept nuclear servitude forever. All colonialism begins in the minds of those willing to be colonised. That happened to our ancestors. Let us not allow that to happen to our generation and to posterity.

India: THE PIONEER Editorial on Atlanta Bombing

BK3107132396 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 31 Jul 96 p 8

[By V.Sudarshan (Foreign Editor): "Does a First World Bomb Say 'Sorry' in English?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Atlanta has provided America with a defining moment. Most of that defining is being done in the newspapers, in the television, and even on the internet where it is possible to download various do-it-yourself manuals for making assorted bombs, which on a scale of sophistication make the pipe bomb look like the equivalent of the Neanderthal Man: Crude, but not rude. Most self-respecting terrorists would be appalled at the dimimutive level of destruction unleashed by that pipe bomb that has been, by all accounts, more dramatic than damaging. It is almost as if it was a part of the regular rock show. The pipe burst and took a grand total of one life, and the Turkish journalist died of a heart attack, which, incidentally, was the name of the band on stage — Jack Mack and The Heart Attack; it has obviously lived up to its name. Most of the injuries caused by the bomb — as many as one hundred and eleven — were not serious, and there is reason to believe, even going by American media reports, that the closest form of medical attention given to some of the injured was a wake up call and a free shave the next morning. Happily, everyone, well almost, has lived to tell the tale.

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Much of it depends on how the telling is done. The CNN had a programme on terrorism and its implications for the United States. People got to phone in with their views. One caller from Calcutta, India, kind of suggested that, perhaps, the American society is a violent one. At this one of the guests, the Congressman from Georgia obviously under the sway of the NRA [National Rifle Association] and the gun lobby, began, literally, to froth at the mouth. He took note of the sheer "gall" of the Indian, and declared that the Indian had no right to make that kind of a moral judgment, that the Congressman had been to India and had seen for himself what kind of a violent society it was with all kinds of political violence which, he said, had killed as many as two prime ministers.

That kind of reaction is typical of the one that obtains in the legislation making level in the United States that refuses to believe that terrorist violence is as much an issue of consequence in the First World as it is in the Third World. [sentence as published] With the kind of impression India is making, thanks in part to our lobbyists there, it might well be time to promote India as a major destination for adventure tourism. Here we are not necessarily talking about Kashmir, and you might not even have to travel further than, say Lajpat Nagar. Flak jackets get to be thrown in for free. But that is neither here nor there. What is of relevance here is that the Congressman from Georgia is factually incorrect. He is guilty of what the Americans like to call a wall- to-wall presumption. Either that or a wall-to-wall ignorance of historical facts, some of them American.

First things first. Rajiv Gandhi was a former prime minister, and that doesn't count nearly as much as an incumbent prime minister.

More importantly, America, in keeping with the seniority that goes along with the fact that it is the oldest democracy rather than being merely the largest democracy, has experienced more assassinations than India where its presidents are concerned. Four and counting.

The first one was as early as 1865, when Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States, was shot dead by John Wilkes Booth. Then in July 1881, the 20th President James Abram Garfield was shot by disgruntled office seeker Charles J Guiteau. Garfield lingered on till September that year. Then William McKinley, the 25th president, was shot dead by an anarchist, while he was welcoming citizens at the Pan-American exposition at Buffalo. Ten presidents later, it was the turn of John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1963, who was done in by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Civilised bombs?

Other than these assassinations there have been attempts on lives of American presidents that surely bear mention here in the "also ran" category. President Ronald Reagan took a direct hit from the besotted John Hinkley Junior. There were two attempts on Gerald Ford, both by women, one by Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme of the Charles Manson Group. This happened long before Dhanu arrived on the scene. And there was the unconventional attempt by a pilot who wanted to land his aircraft on Bill Clinton in the White House as well as the two "drive-by" shootings he experienced. There are presumably dozens more on the blue-print stage. We are not even going into the Bobby Kennedy killing for which they got Sirhan B Sirhan, but it is illustrative. History tells us Bobby Kennedy's idea of a wet dream was to do away with Cuba's Fidel Castro, beard and everything, with a trick cigar in a manner no razor could ever achieve. Those were the good old days when the most significant component of the American foreign policy export was death and destabilisation. In other words political violence, the world being their oyster.

Compared to all this, India has just two very unfortunate losses in fifty years. It is a point to be noted, not distorted. Not much of a pattern there. On the other hand, given the fact that the first assassination of an American President happened more than one hundred and thirty years ago in 1865, it is practically a tradition to have all manners of loonies take pot shots at their President. When even certifiable nut cases begin to use their President for target practice, and it goes largely unacknowledged, it is time to start worrying about the mental health of the nation.

The Congressman's special talent of not letting facts get in the way of analysis is shared by a lot of others out there. It just so happens that some of these people also get to forms late laws [as published] that affects us in ways we do not particularly looks forward to. It is the perception that counts, and for the Third World, it is a regular mug's game. The other day soon after the blasts in a suburban commuter train in Colombo took the lives of seventy Sri Lankans, the BBC anchor shot some remarkable questions at the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in London who was called to the studio. It was on July 25, another red letter day for the LTTE. The anchor woman asked why the Sri Lankan Government had not moved to prevent the blasts despite the knowledge that there was a definite security risk and the High Commissioner patiently explained that it was a terrorist attack, the kind for which the LTTE does not publish schedules in advance. There was a bit of to-and-fro till the High Commissioner gently pointed out that such blasts happen in the West, in the US, even

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in London, after which the anchor woman thought it wise to say a quick Thank You to their guest before more damage could be done. The High Commissioner's implication was, if they had not found a cure why pick on others?

The Australians, for one, certainly have not used the Atlanta blast to throw a giant wet blanket on the Olympics in the manner they did in Sri Lanka before the World Cup. Is there a difference between a terrorist strike in the First World and one in the Third World? So long as a bomb is not invented which says afterwards in English, "Sorry about this. Please try and understand it is nothing personal." Just that a bomb has got to do what a bomb has got to do, there is no ground to pretend that there is a difference.

India: Gowda Heads Reconstituted Planning Commission

BK0108095896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Planning Commission has been reconstituted with the prime minister, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, as the chairman and the former finance minister, Professor Madhu Dandavate, as the deputy chairman.

According to a notification issued by the government, the reconstituted Planning Commission will have 11 members including member-secretary, Mr. Vimal Jalan. The other members of the commission are the agriculture minister, Mr. Chaturanan Mishra; Finance Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, minister of state for planning, Mr. Y.K. Alagh; Dr. S.R. Hashim, Dr. J.S. Bajaj; Dr. M.R. Srinivasan; Dr. Arjun Sengupta, Dr. Mrs. Chitra Naik; Dr. G. Thimaiah; and Mr. S.P. Shukla.

The reconstituted Planning Commission will soon formulate the midterm appraisal of the ninth five-year plan. The planning and program implementation minister, Professor Y.K. Alagh, informed the Rajya Sabha during the question hour today that the draft paper has been circulated to various ministries. He said the midterm appraisal will be released after receiving comments from the ministries. Professor Alagh said the rural antipoverty programs are being reviewed for formulating the ninth five-year plan. The minister said six working groups have been constituted for reviewing the existing program of poverty alleviation and rural development.

India: Gowda Interviewed on Policies and Opposition

BK3107101396 Madras THE HINDU in English 30 Jul 96

[Unattributed Report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bangalore 29 July — The Prime Minister, Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda, today asserted that "we (United Front) are going to be a well-knit unit with the Common Minimum Program. There have been no differences or confrontations. If there are minor problems we will sort them out".

Mr. Gowda, who was here on a day's visit to see his ailing mother, said in an interview to The HINDU that there was complete cohesion with all partners getting along well. He described the speculation that differences were brewing among constituents of the United Front as "the imagination of some for whom to paint an unrealistic picture has become a tradition. Such accounts may have some momentary effect but people are capable of understanding them."

The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr. L. K. Advani, was reported to have observed here yesterday that the Government's condition was like that of a terminally ill patient. Even a stumble or a sneeze was enough for its collapse.

The Prime Minister was also categorical in his opinion. He underlined it as his opinion as an ordinary citizen and not Prime Minister that the Congress-I should not split in the interest of the country.

Responding to questions about his meetings with senior Congress-I leaders such as Mr. Karunakaran and Mr. Sharad Pawar and the speculation they had given rise to, Mr. Gowda said: "Even though it (future of the Congress Party) is an internal affair of the Congress-I, in my humble opinion it is of paramount importance that the Congress-I remains without a split in order to strengthen the secular forces. It is not proper for anyone to expect a split. I am not going to contribute to it nor indulge in mean politics (of splitting a party)".

The Prime Minister said his meeting with Mr. Karunakaran, dissident leader, had nothing to do with politics. They discussed matters relating to Kerala's development. There was no need to attribute motives to the meeting. He had called on the former Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, and other senior Congress-I leaders such as Mr. S. B. Chavan and Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. There was no speculation on those meetings. "It has become a habit with some sections to indulge in speculation", Mr. Gowda remarked.

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About the possibility of the Congress-I joining the United Front Ministry, Mr. Gowda said: "It is left to the Congress Party, the Congress Working Committee and its leaders. If an opinion is expressed by the Congress-I on joining the United Front Government, the matter will be considered by the Steering Committee of the United Front and a decision taken."

The Prime Minister scotched rumours that the relationship between him and Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao had begun to sour. "Our relationship cannot be spoiled and it will not be spoiled. It continues to be as cordial as it was when I was Chief Minister and Mr. Rao was Prime Minister."

Mr. Deve Gowda dismissed as baseless reports about the growing differences with the CPI [Communist Party of India], one of the United Front constituents, especially after the appointment of Mr. Romesh Bhandari as Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He said he had not received any protest letter from that party as speculated. He had discussions with Mr. Jyoti Basu, West Bengal Chief Minister, and Mr. Indrajit Gupta, Union Home Minister. Mr. Bhandari's posting had been decided before Mr. Gupta joined the Ministry. Therefore it was incorrect to say Mr. Gupta was not consulted.

The Prime Minister also pointed out that the Madhya Pradesh Governor was also in charge of another big State like Uttar Pradesh where elections were due. What had been done was only a transfer. No new Governors had been appointed and Mr. Gupta would certainly be consulted when such appointments were made.

The Prime Minister said some decisions taken by the UF Government in the last five weeks, and the Union and Railway budgets, had given to the people a new "message" of what the intentions of the Government were, which way it intended to move and whether it was for the common man and the poor or the rich. "I leave it to the judgment of the people", he said.

Mr. Gowda pointed out that when he donned the mantle of Prime Minister the political situation in the country was not good. He was fully conscious of it. He had not set his eyes on the Prime Minister's gadi [seat] or had any personal desire to occupy that place. He decided to shoulder the responsibility yielding to the pressure and unanimous decision taken by secular parties at a critical juncture.

Referring to some of the decisions taken by the Government, he said though they assumed office seven weeks ago, they could function only after 12 days after the legitimacy of the Government was established. The situation concerning the mounting deficit relating to petroleum products was pretty bad. He would not blame anybody nor hold anyone responsible. A rather unsavoury decision which did not go down well with the people was the hike in the prices of petroleum products. It had become inevitable and there was a problem with the threat of suspension of crude oil by foreign suppliers. The deficit was to the tune of Rs. [rupees] 6,000 crores by June 30. The oil companies had crossed their "Lakshman Rekha [confines]" for the borrowing limits. Even his predecessor, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, had written on the relevant files that urgent steps should be taken to cover the deficit. If the situation had been allowed to continue the deficit would have reached Rs. 11,700 crores by March 1997. Even with the hike, the cost of petroleum products in India continued to be cheaper compared to most countries barring the United States, in spite of the Government giving huge subsidy, the projected deficit by March 1997 was Rs. 5,000 crores. He would only appeal to people to appreciate the situation which forced the unpalatable decision and cooperate with the Government.

"We have taken the utmost care in the Railway and general budgets not to affect the common man", the Prime Minister said and made a pointed reference to some of decisions like subsidy to fertilizers, revival of subsidy to tractors and power tillers, sprinkler and drip irrigation equipment, provision of Rs. 1,000 crores towards the loan component of NABARD [National Bank For Agriculture and Rural Development] to be increased to Rs. 5,000 crores in the next four years, creation of farmers finance development corporations in some States and a special outlay for amelioration of slum dwellers for the first time, women's finance development corporations to help widows and destitutes to take up avocations to become self-reliant and a time-bound programme for providing minimum needs like all-weather roads, drinking water and health facilities.

Mr. Gowda claimed that it was the first time that priorities and a time-bound programme had been set in seven areas after two days of indepth discussions by all Chief Ministers. While giving many concessions to the poor and farmers, the Government had decided to introduce levy for the zero tax companies. The Prime Minister said he would leave it to people to judge whether the Government's sympathies lay with the poor and working class or the rich.

Mr. Gowda said he tried to get the "message" across to the people during his visit to Uttar Pradesh. Top leaders of the UF would be addressing a first public meeting in Uttar Pradesh on August 10. This would mark the beginning of an election campaign with the UF fighting the elections in UP unitedly.

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The Congress-BSP [Bahujan Samaj Party] tie-up in UP had caused some concern. He was sure that the UF partners would fight together. "There is no question of any discord", he averred.

The Prime Minister said the question of further expansion of the Cabinet was not before him. But the Planning Commission would be reconstituted in a day or two.

India: Congress and CPM said 'Sitting in the Same Tree'

96AS0031B Calcutta SAPTAHIK BARTAMAN in Bengali 29 Jun 96 pp 13-15

[Article by Prabir Ghoshal: Congress and CPM are Worried After Seeing the Crowded Assemblage Drawn by BJP]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Subhash Mukhopadhayay is not a poet, but a government employee, also an ardent supporter of the Congress and an active party worker. Prior to the election, Subhash and others set up an organization called the 9th August Committee in Hooghly this time for containing Communist Party of India-Marxist [CPM] rigging. If government employees like Subhash did not take this time take such a tough attitude for the purpose of preventing corruption in the casting and counting of votes, then Congress would not have achieved such an implausible victory in the industrial region of Hooghly.

The same Subhash, who works at the DI [Directorate of Industries] office in Chunchra, was somehow looking depressed after the elections. Prior to the voting I saw this gentleman as practically crazy over Congress. But he was awfully distressed at the role of the Congress after Deve Gowda's government came to power at the center. It is his firm belief that although this Delhi government depends on Congress support, in reality the CPM is controlling Deve Gowda behind the scene. This new polarization in politics that has come up with the help of a remote control is embodied in Harkrishan Singh Surjit [CPM politburo member and cabinet minister].

Along with educated Congress workers like Subhash, this belief is gradually building up in the minds of thousands of anti-Left Front people in Ganganj. The crippled Deve Gowda is walking with two crutches under his arm pits — one of them is the Congress and the other the CPM. Since Indira Gandhis death this kind of doubt in relation to the Congress government and its leadership at the center was building up among Congress supporters in this state. Rajiv Gandhi during his prime ministership had openly lavishly praised the Left Government's panchayat [local government] work. Yet, the biggest issue between the CPM and the Congress in this state is the corruption in the panchayats.

Even sitting in the chair of the prime minister, Narasimha Rao did not want to annoy Jyoti Basu or the CPM. On the contrary, the Congress leadership in Delhi was continuing its flattery to the Left Front government and their bosses. Congress members like Mamata Banerjee expressed their grief at this behavior of the Congress high command both inside and outside the party. They could not do much, and the anti-CPM movement could not build up effectively in West Bengal. There was also no continuity in Mamata's militant agitation and thus, the CPM ruled without any worry.

But the secret understanding between Congress and communists in Delhi and how much the people were vocal against it, first came to light in the 1991 election. Without any warning, the candidates contesting under the insignia of the lotus of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] in this state secured about 3.6 million votes. In fact, winning about 12 percent of the votes on the soil of West Bengal on that day, the BJP overnight robbed sleep from the eyes of the Left Front and the Congress leaders.

No political party, not even the state BJP leadership, could at first guess that so many people of West Bengal would give them votes. At Dum Dum — a long time leftist fortress — the BJP received 163,000 votes in a contest for the Lok Sabha seat. Not only in Dum Dum, the lotus bloomed vigorously in the border districts as well as in the district of Birbhum.

Since then the political leaders and experts are doing research on how the BJP raised its head in West Bengal? However, different persons give different opinions. It is but natural that there will be debate on why such a thing has happened in this state where CPM and Congress votes are polarized.

Various kinds of views are also heard in political circles on why such a huge crowd gathered on 14 June at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Esplanade meeting in Calcutta. Hearing all this it seems to this reporter that it was like the illness of Nandaram, a character of a story *THE MEDICAL CRISIS*, written by a respected [Bengali] writer Parasuram. There everyone was diagnosing the trouble in a different way and likewise prescribing medicine but no one could pin point the exact illness. Some Congressmen asked: Why should Vajpayee's meeting be held at the Esplanade? Why should not the BJP show courage and stage it at the Brigade [a big meeting ground in Calcutta]? In the opinion of a CPM leader: "The people went to see Vajpayee, and 40,000

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to 50,000 such people gather at any party meeting in Esplanade. What is there to worry about so much?"

The crowd in Vajpayee meeting was in reality posing a challenge to the CPM and the Congress in this state and this was not realized by the ordinary members of the two parties. Therefore, the disease remained undetected. However, the CPM reckoned after the emergence of the BJP in the state in 1991 that it was profitable and not a loss to them because the BJP has nicely split the anti-Left Front votes. As result the Congress suffered tremendous loss and the CPM enjoyed the benefit.

Besides the CPM and the Congress, if any one has at this moment in West Bengal a thing called the vote bank, then that is the BJP. Some non-CPM partners in the Left Front have a few organizations in their pocket, but considering the population, those are barely negligible. The partners to the Left Front cross the hurdles of election entirely sitting on the shoulders of the CPM.

Under such a situation, with a hurricane speed the BJP came forward in the state. But in the just concluded election, their number of votes reduced considerably. About 1.1 million votes have gone out of the BJP box. When the lotus was blooming everywhere in different regions of India, why was the BJP condition was so miserable in this state? Before searching for an answer to this question, it is better to state that despite reduction in votes, the BJP is still a third force in West Bengal. This time the Congress has won 9 Lok Sabha seats from here. The Left Front candidates would lose if in other 13 constituencies — like Dum Dum, Diamond Harbor, and Raiganj — BJP votes were added to the Congress. In other words, in this election too, out of 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal, the majority of the voters in 22 seats have given their verdicts against the Left Front.

After an unprecedented success of the BJP in 1991 elections, many people started thinking that the objective of teir choosing the lotus has failed because they found that instead of restraining the CPM, the splitting of votes has cleared the road for a victory of the red party. At that time those who cast their vote for the BJP undoubtedly wanted as much a defeat for the CPM as defeat of the Congress.

But the BJP could not march hundreds of thousands of depressed, angry people, who turned their face from the Congress for various reasons, to a tune of agitation. The BJP leadership miserably failed to determine how the fertile land in West Bengal could be turned into greenery with abundant of food crops. BJP has not started any agitation in the state since 1991, one which could utterly harass the Left Government. Instead of strengthening the organization and presenting themselves to the common people as an alternative to the Congress, some of the BJP leaders engaged themselves in ugly internal squabbles. Like the Congress high command, the BJP leadership in Delhi, considered [their ability to draw votes in] West Bengal as dying out.

Despite the open fight between Mamata Banerjee and Somen Mitra [president of West Bengal Congress Party] prior to the election, the majority of the anti-Left Front people in West Bengal have selected the Congress as the alternative to the CPM. One of the reasons for this was the experience of 1991. At that time after giving their votes to the BJP, many regretted helping bring a victory to the CPM in a round-about way. Their second reason was that the BJP has no leadership [in Bengal].

But after the election a speedy change started in the political scenario and it was thoroughly felt that the wind reached West Bengal. There was a time when even noticing the expansion of the BJP, the CPM was not bothered because that was profitable and not a loss for it. But this time after suddenly waking up from their slumber the authorities of the Alimuddhin Street [headquarters of the CPM in West Bengal] started screaming as if they were being attacked. What is their fear? Let me tell this in a little detail. In the past for uttering this word [BJP] E.M.S. Namboodiripad was cursed by the Bengali leaders of the CPM. That well-experienced communist leader from Kerala declared long ago that the real danger to the CPM is not the Congress but the BJP. Defying Namboodiripad's logic the CPM leaders of this state gave their verdict that he was not right and the Congress was the principal enemy to the nation and the party. Maybe the aged Kerala communist leader's soliloquy after all proves itself true.

However, Namboodiripad marked the BJP as a danger with the logic of theory, and now the CPM leaders of the Alimuddin Street are seeing a thorn in the lotus for a different reason. All political parties believe that in the near future, the BJP could capture power in Delhi. If that happens, then those who are boastfully ruling from the floors of the Writers [West Bengal government secretariat] building will be ruined. Whatever they might say outwardly, at least in their minds, the CPM leaders are afraid. If the BJP rules, there is no escape for the Left Front government.

The CPM leaders are more frightened after this election because their base in West Bengal has become quite shaky. The bosses of Alimuddin are suffering from the fear that their most cherished palace could fall and dismantle like a house of cards at any moment. Despite practicing large-scale fraud and cheating, the CPM could not this time have its own wish regarding the outcome of the election. It is understood from the vote count at what rate there was rigging. Along

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with the Congress, the votes of the CPM have also increased largely in this state. This is an unprecedented phenomenon in a parliamentary democracy and nowhere in the world does such voting takes place.

It will be realized if we go a little deep into this that there lies in this unnatural count of increase of votes the mystery of the huge victories for the CPM. Burdwan is known as red fort. This time the Congress outcome was good in Asansol sub-division. The total voting there was less than 70 percent . But the rate of voting in Katoya, Kalna and Burdwan subdivisions was unprecedentally high — about 90 percent more than what was in 1986. In these three subdivisions the Left Front candidates won in most of the seats obtaining record number of votes.

If an anti-Communist government like the BJP sits in Delhi, then who can say where they will lead the general public in West Bengal by provoking them. Moreover, the future of the Congress is not that bright in national politics. Another split in it would not be surprising. What will be the condition of the Congress managed by the CPM in West Bengal, is also a matter concern for the Alimuddin bosses.

The condition of the Congress is already like a guardianless family. It is difficult to say whether or not Narasimha Rao will remain as the party chief in Delhi, but after the election the Congress is proceeding like a boat without any sail or direction. The decision the Congress high command has taken to support the Deve Gowda government at the center with the condition of opposing the BJP, is expected to not cause much inconvenience to the party workers in Maharashtra state because the BJP and the Congress are the principal enemies there. But the political polarization in the states of West Bengal and Kerala is completely different. For very natural reasons it is not possible for the Congress members like Mamata to accept the coexistence in Delhi of the United Front, Left Front and the Congress.

Of course Mamata has to make political calculations, but sincere Congress workers like Subhash might not have the patience for it. This time the BJP is making as its target these anti-Left people in West Bengal. That is why BJP leaders, starting from Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Sushma Swaraj and Tapan Sikdar, are implying that Delhi's new political reality is a Jyoti Basu-Mamata honeymoon. Among all the men and women leaders of the Congress in this state Mamata is at the top when it comes to feelings of betrayal. Jyoti Basu is the commander-in-chief of her opposite camp. Therefore, the BJP has selected these two leaders of the two sides as the focal point of their attack. However, they are criticizing Mamata more because without crushing the popularity of this woman leader, they wont be able to advance in West Bengal.

Therefore, naturally, at the pressure of this two-prong attack of the BJP, the bewildered look of the CPM and the Congress leaders have become obvious after the record public gathering at Vajpayee meeting in Calcutta. The BJP has no organization in this state. Initially the newspaper also did not show excessive enthusiasm about the Vajpayee meeting. Even then thousands of people were present at this meeting and that caused the pangs of death to the CPM and the Congress leaders. They are separately shouting for help. Forgetting all their enmity, as a snake and a frog survive in the same branch of a tree at the time of floods, in the similar manner, this inclination for coexistence among the CPM-Congress leaders to oppose the BJP will in grow in the coming days. That will intensify both sympathy and support of the people for the BJP.

Within the next few months, some important political events will take place in the country. This includes an election to the Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly. If in that election the BJP can secure a good result and capture the Lucknow administration, then the wind of Lotus will be further expanded. It is the belief of the general public that by winning the next Lok Sabha election, the BJP is coming to power in Delhi.

The influence of this idea is bound to fall also on West Bengal. The millions of anti-left voters, who are always cursing the Jyoti Basu clique, will get strength in their mind. They will begin to rely more on the BJP than the Congress. Meanwhile, if there is a split in the Congress, then due its effect the political scenario in West Bengal could also change fast. There will be nothing surprising if one section of the Congress marches forward jointly the with BJP.

India: Rao Challenges High Court Ruling on Cheating Case

BK3107110796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1030 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The former prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, today moved a petition before the Supreme Court challenging the Delhi High Court verdict on his appeal on the Lakhubhai Pathak cheating case. The high court in its verdict yesterday had upheld an order of the chief metropolitan magistrate summoning Mr. Rao to appear before him as a co-accused in the case.

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India: Rao Exempted From Court Appearance in Cheating Case

BK3107130496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Supreme Court today exempted the former prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, from appearing before the Delhi Chief Metropolitan Magistrate [CMM], Mr. Prem Kumar, in the Lakhubhai Pathak case. The exemption was granted by a division bench comprising the chief justice, Mr. A.M. Ahmadi, and Mr. Justice B.L. Hansaria on Mr. Rao's special leave petition. The petition challenged the dismissal by the Delhi High Court his appeal seeking quashing of an order of the CMM to appear as a co-accused in the case. The court fixed a preliminary hearing on the 12th of next month.

Iran

Iran: Article Announces Attack Into Iraqi Kurdistan

LD3107115196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 27 Jul 96 p 12

[From the "Media World" Column: "Group"]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group called the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran, which is engaged in activities along the Iran-Iraq border, has claimed that in the course of a clash between the Law Enforcement Forces and men associated with that party near the city of Saqqez, two officials of the Law Enforcement Forces lost their lives.

The bases of the group are located in northern Iraq. The group was not engaged in any activities over the past few years because of decisive operations carried out by the Law Enforcement Forces and the Army.

Political analysts believe that such claims are made to say that the group carried out some activities!

Iran's Action in Kurdistan 'Open Challenge' to U.S.

MM3107141896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Jul 96 p 15

[Article by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Iran in Iraqi Kurdistan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is clear that Tehran timed the Iranian military operation in Iraqi Kurdistan to cause maximum embarrassment to the United States, which is trying very hard to persuade Islamic leader Necmettin Erbakan's government in Turkey to allow the Western protection force under its command to remain longer on Turkish soil in order to protect the Iraqi Kurds within the framework of the so-called "Provide Comfort" operation.

Official U.S. comments on the Iranian operation are the best indication that this is the case, since Nicholas Burns, the State Department's official spokesman, would only say that there is no room in northern Iraq for Iran's intervention. This is the kind of talk that Tehran no longer takes any notice of, because as everybody knows, for over a year at least, Tehran has become the main foreign player in the region and can order the Kurdish leaderships to do its bidding.

The truth is that Tehran is taking advantage of the complications and difficulties facing U.S. policy on northern Iraq, particularly in view of the fact that this policy is vague, indecisive, and, in itself, purposeless. Also, Washington is treating northern Iraq as an element of its general policy toward Baghdad, and then there is the fact that this approach takes into consideration mainly the United States' strategic relations with Turkey, which basically has no policy with regard to the Kurds in general and northern Iraq in particular, a fact which makes U.S. policy even more obscure.

However, unlike Washington and Ankara, Tehran's objectives in northern Iraq seem very clear, particularly with regard to containing the "dual containment" and weakening the U.S. and Turkish influence. This explains its success in imposing its will on the Iraqi Kurdish leaderships and turning their areas into a major area of its influence, to the point that it can be said, without exaggeration, that it was able to achieve, for the first time, an unobstructed geographical extension between Iran and Syria.

Of course, Iran, being the most experienced in the region in dealing with the Iraqi Kurds, skillfully took advantage of U.S. and Turkish hesitation, which Tehran spared no effort to cause. In this, it was helped by the infighting between the two main Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (led by Jalal Talabani), and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (led by Mas'ud Barzani).

While Iran behaved like someone who is sure of what he wants and knows how to get it, U.S. and Turkish policies were in disarray because of the two states' conflicting regional interests, particularly in view of the fact that Turkey has suffered, and is still suffering, successive political crises which ultimately led to a government led by an Islamic party for the first time since the foundation of the secular Turkish republic 73 years ago. Perhaps the best indication of this disarray is Ankara's recently attempt to get rid of "Provide Comfort" despite the fact that this operation is the only way the Turks can maintain a somewhat limited influence in northern Iraq, according to comments by

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the prominent Turkish commentator Muhammad 'Ali Bayrand [name as transliterated].

Because of this situation, and because of the increasing vacuum in politics and power in northern Iraq, Iran has become the only quarter capable of filling this void, which is what it has started to do over the past year or more. In all likelihood, its recent military operation was not based on security considerations only, but was also a political action intended as an open challenge to the United States.

Iran: Iranian Dissidents Condemn Regime's Incursion in Iraq

NC3107184996 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Joint Statement by the Ettehad-e Feda'iyan-e Khalq-e Iran, the Cherikha-ye Feda'i-e Khalq-e Iran—minority group, and the Revolutionary Workers Organization of Iran, Rah-e Kargar, on 28 July—place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] According to the reports disseminated by the Democratic Party of Iranian Kordestan [DPIK], thousands of repressive Guards of the Islamic Republic's regime, who crossed through the Marivan border on the evening of 26 July in the al-Sulaymaniyah region and deployed themselves on Iraqi soil, shelled the DPIK headquarters and the Iranian Kordish refugees' camp this morning at 0630, local time, and launched a ground attack which lasted until 1000 AM. At this moment, there are no precise reports of the number of casualties.

This aggressive and repressive act by the regime takes place at a time when the discontent of people all over Iran, and in Kordestan in particular, continues to proliferate and the regime has stepped up its extensive repressive measures for combating the people's struggles.

The reactionary leaders of the regime are harboring delusions that repressive actions will be able to combat the Kordish people and to create a rift among their ranks. We strongly condemn this aggressive and repressive action of the Islamic Republic and we have no doubts that this time as well, as in the past, the regime will encounter defeat and failure.

Iran: Political Prisoners Denounce Cross-Border Attack

NC3107192596 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

["Statement" issued by the Center of the Political Prisoners of Iran, 29 July—place not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Republic is a government of war and crime. The Center of the Political Prisoners of Iran [CPPI] calls the attention of world public opinion to the military attack by the Iranian regime on Iraqi Kurdistan and the killing of Iranian Kordish refugees — most of whom are women and children — and the tyrannizing of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan.

We appeal to the people of the world, to the progressive forces, and local and international organizations defending human rights and the right to asylum to exert pressure on the reactionary repressive regime of the Islamic Republic and to halt its attacks on Iranian Kordish refugees and the Democratic Party of Iranian Kordestan [DPIK] headquarters.

On 28 July 1996, by capitalizing on the regional and international situation and compromising the autonomous government of Iraqi Kurdistan, the Islamic Republic directly, and without any attempt to disguise its action, dispatched thousands of its repressive forces armed with heavy weapons and artillery via Marivan, into Iraqi Kurdistan and deployed them at the al-Salam base near al-Sulaymaniyah.

While condemning this savage act by the Islamic Republic, we call on the international community to exert pressure on this regime for halting the bombardment of the Iranian refugees and the DPIK headquarters, which has resulted so far in the killing of dozens of people and wounding hundreds, for a halt to its aggression on the sovereignty of the Iraqi Kurdistan, and for the departure of its repressive troops from Kurdistan.

Iran: Radio Says Iraqi Kurdistan Refugees Stage 'Sit-in'

NC3107190796 (Clandestine) Voice of the Worker in Persian 1430 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [words indistinct] is one of the characteristics of the Islamic Republic's regime. The usurpation of rights, and [words indistinct] have been experienced in practice by all workers, toilers, and freedom seekers, as well as all the national, religious, and ethnic groups in Iran.

The Islamic Republic regime is a completely religion-oriented regime, in the sense that it does not tolerate any opposition or mode of thought except its own. [indistinct passage omitted]

On the basis of the statement that was issued by the political bureau of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kordestan today, a large part of the aggressor forces of the Islamic Republic returned to Iran, but the aggressive troops of the jurisconsults, as we stated a day earlier,

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rendered more than 2000 refugees homeless. Yes. More than 2000 Iranian Kurdish refugees are staging a sit-in outside the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] in Irbil in Iraqi Kurdistan. These refugees are sitting outside under a tent from one end of the street to the other and are living in extremely difficult conditions.

They want at least the minimum of safety from the repression of the Islamic Republic's regime. We support the demands of the refugees staging the sit-in in Irbil, and we call on all the international organizations defending asylum-seekers, war refugees, and human rights to intervene swiftly and support the Kordish refugees who have staged it.

The sorrowful fate of the protesting refugees is a manifestation of the bestial and vengeful nature of the Islamic Republic regime. With support the Iranian Kurdish refugees, we convey our cry of protest to the people of the world.

Iran: Commentary Views G-7 Meeting on Terrorism in Paris

LD3107145996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1000 GMT 31 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, officials from seven of the world's industrial countries and Russia came together in Paris to discuss ways of confronting international terrorism. The idea of holding this meeting was approved at the G-7 session in Lyon, France. The explosion at the U.S. base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, which took place during the approach to the annual meeting of the G-7, intensified the need for taking coordinated action; and the explosion at the Olympic park in the United States forced the G-7 to reach agreement sooner than anticipated, despite all the differences of opinion.

As expected, the differences between Europe and the United States remained in force at yesterday's meeting in Paris, and the two sides only reached agreement on the technical aspects of combating terrorism. On the basis of the talks in Paris, regulations on the extradition of criminals, exchange of security intelligence, and methods of checking bank accounts to prevent the provision of funds for terrorist operations are some of the topics that will be reviewed. The aim of all these reassessments is to allow international criminals to be arrested more easily after committing a crime and so that, supposedly, no safe place will remain for criminals in the world.

The Paris meeting reached no decision about uprooting the phenomenon of terrorism, and the measures agreed there suggest that the participants limited themselves to addressing the investigation into the crime and arresting criminals. Of course, before this too, political analysts predicted that the Paris meeting would be confined to this, because uprooting terrorism and violent operations require a reassessment of the domestic and international policies of the world's big countries — because the double standards practiced by the big powers, disregard for terrorist actions perpetrated against nonfriendly countries, and promoting a culture of individual and collective violence in the visual media are seen as the greatest factors encouraging violent behavior.

The appearance of the phenomenon of domestic terrorism in influential countries and, especially, the United States and their great desperation in the face of this phenomenon are some of the results of these same double standards.

On the other hand, limiting terrorist actions to bombing, hijacking, and similar kinds of actions is an unrealistic and unfair approach, because then state terrorism — that is, the legal terrorism that is carried out openly and officially against nations and according to which a nation is punished every day by economic means — hunger, and underdevelopment for opposing the colonial policies of a big government is left unaccounted for.

This is why, although the Paris meeting may intensify controls at airports and facilitate the extradition of criminals, overlooking the roots of terrorist actions will undoubtedly lead them to become even more complicated.

Iran: Radio Commentary Views U.S. 'Two-Faced Policies' on Iran

LD0108135396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 1 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] American Secretary of State Warren Christopher called on European Union member countries to aid the U.S. in the implementation of a legislation, which according to Washington officials is aimed at isolation of Iran. Speaking on Wednesday, 31 July, in the International Relations Committee of the American Congress, the U.S. secretary of state claimed that the European countries have not fully perceived the terrorist tendencies of countries like Iran.

Justifying the U.S. efforts for the so-called isolation of Iran, he referred to the American president's decision, saying that Clinton has taken huge steps so as to, according to Warren Christopher, prevent Iran from

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financial support of terrorism. Christopher's comment is a clear sign of the animosity of the U.S. with the Islamic system of Iran which has been pursued in various ways from the victory of the Islamic revolution up to date. However, we can say that the American political defeats in the last year, after the implementation of the U.S.-imposed embargoes against Iran, are now more [numerous] than ever before.

According to many political experts, this period is one of the hardest periods in the U.S. foreign policies during the recent years. In fact, the Washington officials are so baffled in their political trend with Iran that they do not hesitate to take illogical actions.

The comment of Warren Christopher is nothing but an unwise and far from political understanding [word indistinct]. The American secretary of state, who has called himself the original element in the struggle against the so-called terrorist countries, should not have forgotten the visual evidences of terrorist actions, like the Oklahoma explosion by the Davidian cult and the explosion in an Atlanta park.

He clearly knows that terrorism now stems from inside the American society and is the (?result) of the wrong policies of the Washington officials. Without a doubt, they are promoting the terrorist activities and have supported the terrorist activities of the Zionist regime, who are making their country a safe haven for known international terrorists.

Therefore, while these two-faced policies exist, any international effort to halt terrorism will fail and the Washington government will take advantage of the issue of terrorism and struggling against it.

Iran: Egypt Supports U.S., Israeli 'Spies'; Latter in Danger

NC3007162996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Jul 96 p 12

[Political commentary: "Death, the Punishment of U.S. and Israeli Agents"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last Tuesday, [16 July] one of the American spies was stabbed outside a hotel where she was staying in Cairo by a combatant Egyptian Muslim. The victim, Judith Goldenberg [name as published], was from Illinois and was employed by the American Embassy in Cairo as a spy for the U.S. military intelligence organization.

This event clearly highlights two kinds of thinking in Egyptian society. One is the government's concept that the land of Egypt is the stomping ground of American and Zionist spies and supports them. The other perception is that of the Egyptian people, who are determined to kill and destroy such lackeys of the United States and Israel in the Islamic country of Egypt.

Just opposite the hotel where Goldenberg was killed, three other spies had been the targets of the revolutionary wrath of the Muslims of Egypt and had been killed in 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993]. Following Goldenberg's murder, the Cairo regime made immense efforts to depict the victim as innocent and the assassin as the criminal. The first reaction of the police was that the murdered person was an American tourist and the murderer was a psychotic youth.

In its statement, the police continued to deny any links between the assassin and Islamic groups in order to downplay the power of the Islamist groups. The reason for labeling the murderer a psychotic youth was also to portray the enemies of Americans in Egypt as psychotic and mentally deranged! Despite this disgraceful ploy, the U.S. Embassy in Cairo—which had apparently not coordinated its propagandist stance on the incident with the Egyptian propaganda apparatus—announced that the victim was a U.S. Embassy employee. Hence it transpired that she was not a tourist.

However, the subsequent misfortune of the Cairo regime was due to the stance adopted by the official spokesman of the Foreign Ministry. He had not corroborated his stance with these two sources and declared the identity of the murdered victim as "a spy of the military intelligence organization," thus indicating that she was not an ordinary employee of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo.

This is merely one side of the story and the other side should be attributed to the insecurity in Egypt about the activities of the internal and foreign agents of the United States and Israel. Today when nearly 18 years have elapsed since the humiliating Camp David accord was signed, the proponents of the accord—whether Israeli, American, or Egyptian—do not feel any sense of security inside Egypt.

The Muslim combatants have tightened the dragnet around the country's regime to such an extent that the Egyptian echelons see the continuation of their rule in jeopardy. Contrary to the modus operandi adopted all over the world, the Egyptian guards who bring the Muslim combatants for trial are armed with machineguns ready to fire. The accused are brought to the court premises in iron cages.

In other words, the Egyptian regime is afraid even of disarmed and incarcerated Muslims. Even now, a third or fourth level Egyptian official does not feel safe enough to walk the streets of Cairo, Asyut, or Alexandria. High-level officials cannot venture from one

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part of the city to another without being accompanied by murderous bodyguards.

This is the condition of a country whose government wishes to project itself as the axis and index of the efforts for peace and compromise and to disgrace the Arab governments before the savage and criminal Israeli despots.

The blunder of the Cairo government and all those governments that are distanced from the will of their people is thinking that the Islamist movement can be reined in and that through the repression of the people their political and Islamic growth and maturity can be halted. Islam and Islamism in the contemporary era is a phenomenon that becomes stronger with regard to its impact on the destiny of Muslim nations and the fate of dictatorial governments the more it is suppressed.

No government can ever be successful against its people. The unforgivable error of the Egyptian Government is that it is constantly seeking to sacrifice its people's honor and pride for the avarice of despotic Israel. It is for this reason that it has transformed the Islamic land of Egypt into a stomping ground for the corrupt Zionists but bares its fangs and talons at its own people. The Egyptian Government's mistake is that it is ignoring its nation's value and the worth of its own culture and is indifferent to the people's spiritual leanings. As a result, this is the source of the blows that it always receives.

Not only the Egyptian nation but all the Muslim nations of the Middle East are aware of the plots of the enemies of Islam and the Koran and their local and regional lackeys. Those hands that clasp one another in combating Islam and Islamism in the region are linked in a fragile alliance. In Islamic countries, especially in the heartland of Egypt, there are numerous honorable individuals who inflict the nemesis of the traitors upon them. This is a fact that the Egyptian echelons are well aware of and they are certain of the effective presence and existence of such unknown individuals.

Iran: Editorial Claims 'Zionists' Using 'New Blackmail' Against U.S.

LD2907201996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 23 Jul 96 pp 1,16

[Unattributed editorial: "New Blackmail Against America by the Zionists"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Western propaganda mouthpieces are once again commissioned to make the Islamic Republic of Iran a target of their attacks.

In the past few days, a number of European and American dailies and weeklies have published articles, in the style and fashion of old fables, in which they have tried to attribute the downing of an American passenger airliner over the Atlantic Ocean to the Islamic Republic of Iran by hints and insinuation; and to create a fresh propaganda climate in order to engage Western public opinion for some time.

The hands behind this propaganda are linked with the Zionist circles. The main feeding source of these publications is international Zionism.

The Zionists pursue several aims with this propaganda. The main one is to blackmail America.

The U.S. Democratic Party desperately needs Zionist assistance in order to win the presidential elections. Under such a situation, causing an incident and benefiting from it, is a ploy with which the Zionists have so far have guaranteed their existence. It is, therefore, possible that the downing of the American airliner was the work of the Zionists themselves, with the intention of attributing it to Muslims, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, through intensive propaganda pressure via mercenary publications, in order to force America to take new amateurish measures against the opponents of the Zionist regime and to pay its profits to the pockets of Zionists even at the cost of harming the prestige of America.

This is the usual Zionist trick. The Americans have been deceived by this trick many times. An important example of this is the explosion caused at the New York Trade Center.

In past years, whenever an incident occurred the Zionists, followed by the Americans, attributed it to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite the fact that they realized later that their claim was baseless, they repeated these false accusations in subsequent incidents. This time round, too, it will be revealed that the Zionists and their stable-mates are wasting their time. The result of all this poisonous propaganda will be nothing else but further exposure of the deceitful character of the West and of Zionism before world public opinion.

Iran: Velayati Interviewed on Bosnia, Islamic Contact Group

LD3107121696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The extraordinary meeting of foreign ministers from the eight member countries of the Islamic contact group began work this morning in Geneva. The one-day meeting is taking place at the invitation of the Bosnian Government, and our country's foreign minister is one of the participants. We conducted a telephone interview with Mr 'Ali Akbar Velayati

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about the agenda of the meeting in Geneva and other issues regarding Bosnia-Herzegovina. Let me draw your attention to this interview:

[Begin recording] [Unidentified Correspondent] Mr. Velayati, would you be so kind as to tell us what issues are being discussed at the Geneva meeting.

[Velayati] Our meeting today, which is being attended by the prime minister of Bosnia, is being held to make decisions regarding the future of Bosnia, safeguarding that country, and removing the obstacles and problems preventing the establishment of a correct system based on the wish of the people there.

[Correspondent] Does the Islamic Republic of Iran have a specific proposal to submit to the meeting?

[Velayati] Yes, we can summarize our proposals in the following few points. First, suggesting a program for the period after the elections in Bosnia; a program that, after being approved by this group, will be proposed for approval at the next meeting of ministers from the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which will be held in New York in early autumn. Then, the continuation of contacts with international organizations, such as the United Nations and the security organization [as heard]. Third, guiding international aid for the reconstruction of Bosnia in a more effective way.

[Correspondent] The United States has once again expressed displeasure about cooperation between Iran and Bosnia, and our country's active participation in the reconstruction of Bosnia. Could you tell us what the reason for this might be?

[Velayati] I have to begin by saying that the lack of credibility — unfortunately or, from our point of view, fortunately — the lack of credibility of the remarks made by American officials, especially about Iran, became clear long ago, and it becomes even clearer with every passing day. From the start, the Americans opposed the presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Bosnia. Despite their serious opposition, we had a presence and played the most fundamental role in preserving Bosnia and preventing the dissolution of that country and the annihilation of Muslims in Bosnia. This is something that is admitted today even in American circles, both by the government and the Congress: that the Islamic Republic of Iran played the most crucial role in preserving Bosnia and the existence of Muslims there. Just as the previous opposition of the United States did not prevent us from continuing our task, in the next stage too we will, undoubtedly, not ask the Americans for permission. It is our Islamic duty, and the ones who have to decide whether or not to accept assistance from the Islamic Republic of Iran are the people of Bosnia and the president of Bosnia. They welcome it. The recent visit of Mr. Habibi to Sarajevo was a clear, practical indication of the determination of the people and Government of Bosnia to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran in continuation of following the difficult path before them.

[Correspondent] Thank you Mr. Velayati. [end recording]

Iran: SALAM—Foreign Pressure Stops B-H Expanding Ties With Iran

LD3107121396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 27 Jul 96 p 3

[From the "Hello Salam" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Reader] I do not know about political analyses by other publications. What I read in your paper is a political analysis of the Bosnian situation. Why does Iran interfere less in Bosnia despite the fact that Iran has played a role there and that considerable aid has been rendered to the Bosnian people by the Iranian people and in view of the U.S. interference in the existing political formation in Bosnia? What are the bases of Iran's involvement in Bosnia?

SALAM — Foreign Service: There is no doubt that the government and the Muslim people of Bosnia are interested in expanding ties with Iran in order to express their appreciation for the Islamic Iran's aid to Muslims in the Balkan region during the four years of their imbalance war against the Serbs and occasionally against the Croats. However, it must be noted that the Muslim leaders of that country [Bosnia], who are going through a period of semi-official occupation of their country by the United States, are facing a series of foreign and internal pressures, which prevent them from realizing their heart-felt desire to expand ties with Iran. Iran's ties with Bosnia are related to the removal of these pressures and the method with which we make use of the existing ties between the two nations.

Iran: Commentary on Turkey's Decision on 'Poised Hammer' Forces

LD3107165796 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Jul 96 p 11

[Unattributed commentary: "Balancing Act: A Hard Test for the Turkish Parliament"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Turkish National Security Council on 25 July extended the term of an agreement allowing the multi-national forces, known as "Poised Hammer" to remain in Turkey for a further six months.

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The forces entered Turkish soil in 1991 following the Persian Gulf war and under a pretext of helping the process of distribution of aid to Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq. The agreement allowing the presence of the forces in Turkey is renewable every six months.

The recent session of the Turkish National Security Council was especially important because it was attended by Nectmettin Erbakan, the new Turkish prime minister.

The Welfare Party [headed by Erbakan] has opposed the presence of these forces on Turkish soil since 1991 on 11 occasions when the voting took place in the Turkish parliament about whether to extend the term of the "Poised Hammer" forces. The party has maintained that their presence on Turkish soil is against the national interest of Turkey.

Today, the Welfare Party as the ruling party and Erbakan, the leader of the party and as the prime minister, have to respond. The Turkish parliament will be a scene of a hard test this week on the power of the Welfare Party to adhere to the slogans of the party. The resolution of the Turkish Security Council will be discussed in a session of the Turkish parliament this week and will be implemented only when it was approved by the parliament.

Political analysts expect the resolution to be passed by the Turkish parliament without any major incident. Because, although the Welfare Party is regarded as a strong force in the Turkish parliament, the forces of "Poised Hammer" did not enter Turkish territory with the permission of either the Turkish Government or its parliament, they do not need their [the Turkish parliament and government] permission to leave.

Furthermore, in its first political test, Erbakan does not want to resort to a risky mission provoking the anger of the United States and other powerful Turkish groups supporting the West, especially the strongest of all, that is the True Path Party, which is an ally of his government. It is also possible that Erbakan is under pressure from the military not to oppose any plan to extend the term of the presence of the U.S. forces in Turkey. This means that Erbakan's silence regarding the approval of a plan allowing the "Poised Hammer" forces in Turkey or even his agreement with such a resolution, do not represent his earlier feelings [sentence as published].

Regarding the presence of these forces in the south of Turkey, Erbakan's viewpoint was that these forces, supported by the Iraqi Kurds, have created legal conditions for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state within Turkey. It is more than 12 years that Turkey has been fighting the rebel Kurds on its soil, and it is against the formation of any independent Kurdish government. There is no differences of opinion between Erbakan or his predecessor over this issue. Erbakan has also accused the international aid agencies in northern Iraq of providing aid to the separatist Kurdish Workers Party with the backing of the Western forces.

Despite this, the fate of the "Poised Hammer" forces will be determined next week in the Turkish parliament. The principal position of the Welfare Party regarding the recent resolution by the Turkish National Security Council will be determined by a decision that will be made during an important session of the Turkish parliament this week.

Iran: Borujerdi—Iran To Encourage Taleban To Join Peace Process

LD3007190496 Tehran IRNA in English 1340 GMT 30 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, July 30, IRNA — Iran will try to encourage Taleban student militia group to join the peace process in Afghanistan and to avoid war and bloodshed in the country, a senior Iranian official said here Tuesday [30 July].

Addressing a press conference, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Allaeddin Borujerdi said that an Iranian delegation is to visit Herat soon to hold talks with Taleban leaders.

Borujerdi said that the Iranian delegation would continue talks with Taleban leaders in Kandahar in case they showed good-will in accepting peace and stopping shelling Kabul he expressed hope that the Taleban would abandon the policy of pursuing bloodshed and war and by accepting a diplomatic solution to the problem would take a positive step in the interest of the Afghan people in order to restore peace and security.

In his earlier talks with Taleban leaders in northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad (Khorasan), he had announced his concern about a rise in production and smuggling of narcotics in areas controlled by the Taleban group and about the spread of insecurity in the region, he said, adding that he had reminded the Taleban leaders of the need to bring Afghan capital Kabul out of the range of their artilley fire. He expressed hope that Iran would succeed in convincing the Taleban to seek peace instead of war-mongering. The most important issues discussed with Afghan officails during his two-day stay in Afghanistan were Tehran-Kabul cooperation, latest situation of peace efforts and ways of improving Kabul-Islamabad ties.

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Borujerdi said that the positive developments and expansion of peace process in Afghanistan have encouraged Iran to continue its efforts to alleviate the sufferings of the Afghan people. He expressed hope that other groups, including the National Islamic Movement led by General Dostam and the Abdol Karim Khalili's wing of Islamic Unity Party as well as the parties based in Jalalabad would join the peace process and settle their disputes with Kabul Government through peaceful means as the Islamic Party of Hekmatyar did.

As for expansion of cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan, Borujerdi said that a delegation is soon to arrive in Tehran from Afghanistan's central bank to ink agreements on receiving banking credits from Tehran.

He added that a delegation from Iran's Construction Jihad Ministry is to visit Kabul for paving the way for Tehran to help Kabul with its reconstruction efforts.

Iran: Situation in Afghanistan Seen as U.S. Plot

NC0108093896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Jul 96 p 9

[Commentary by Afghan journalist Abuzar Pirzadeh: "Washington's Call to Afghan Leaders—Yet Another American Plot Against Afghanistan's Muslims"]

[FBIS Translated Text] After the signing of the peace and cooperation pact between the Hezb-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan and the Kabul government or, in other words, the Jami'at-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan, which laid the cornerstone for peace, understanding, and dialogue among the Afghan groups, futile efforts and plots were started by Western arrogance and especially world-devouring America in a bid to confront this God-pleasing act.

Among these futile and dangerous efforts and plots, we can refer to Washington's recent call to the leaders of Afghan groups and to Afghan dignitaries to attend a meeting in America in order to so-called solve the Afghanistan problem.

Although this attempt by Washington is a reaction to the peace pact between Hekmatyar and Rabbani, a look at the history of the Afghan Muslims' jihad during the savage aggressions of the Russian occupiers and of their hirelings in Afghanistan shows that Washington's recent effort is yet another American plot against the combatant Muslims in this country.

This is a plot that manifests America's blatant intervention in Afghanistan's domestic affairs with the objective of sowing discord among the mujahidin in order to protract the war among the groups, to prevent the consolidation of the recent pact on peace and understanding between the Hezb-e Eslami-ye Afghanistan and Mr. Rabbani's government, and — ultimately — to prevent the establishment of an Islamic rule, which is what the Afghan nation wants for Afghanistan.

This American plot is nothing new. Similar plots have been hatched against the true Afghan mujahidin several times throughout the many years of Afghanistan's jihad and at various junctures; and each time it has been the faith, the political alertness, and the continuation of the Muslim mujahidin's breath-taking struggles that have foiled these plots. But we should not forget the negative impact that they have had on Afghanistan's current developments. Therefore, the mujahidin and their true friends, and especially the Islamic Republic of Iran, should strive as best as they can to neutralize and to thwart these plots.

A brief glance at the history of the jihad and of the Islamic revolution in Afghanistan shows that America's various plots against the combatant Afghan Muslims started with the very outset of the hireling Taraki government and the commencement of the armed jihad in various parts of the country against the pro-Russian regime. In the very first days of the jihad, the Americans referred to the mujahidin as rebels in their propaganda and they described their just uprising, struggle, jihad, and Islamic revolution against the Russian aggressors as a rebellion.

The mass media in the West and especially in America, which were afraid to use the words mujahid, jihad, revolution, martyrdom, and so on, were doing their best to prevent the revival of Islamic words among the Afghan Muslims and others in the fight against the aggressors. But not only did they fail in their attempt, but today we see how even the American mass media, despite their inner wishes, have been forced to use such words and phrases.

Moreover, during the jihad and especially during the Russians' savage aggression against Afghanistan, America constantly tried to distract the Islamic movement and to directly or indirectly weaken it. One of these attempts can be seen in the effort to strengthen and to propagate the idea of creating many parties and in spreading discord among the mujahidin.

America has been successful in this effort to a large extent, and the ills stemming from the existence of numerous parties and discord continue to exist even today now that the mujahidin have overthrown the communist regime. Our Muslim nation continues to suffer from all this. But thanks to the devotion of the true mujahidin, America has been unable to distract the Islamic movement of Afghanistan from its path, which leads to the establishment of an Islamic rule in Afghanistan.

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Also, because of its colonialist interests and in view of its rivalry with the Soviet Union at that time, America started a flood of various weapons and military materiel and financial assistance to the mujahidin in order to weaken their martyrdom-seeking morale and to make them dependent on American arms—something it was able to achieve to a certain extent.

With the implementation of this American plot, the interest of a number of mujahidin in arms and in material resources grew and, ultimately, this led to the creation among some of the mujahidin of a wish for comfort and reduced their interest in the war. This tragic situation was very visible in the last years of the Russians' aggression and during the rule of the hireling Najibollah. It was so visible that we all saw how in the first days after the beginning of the jihad, a group of 10 or 20 devoted and martyrdom-seeking people could carry out a surprise attack at night and occupy a governorate while in succeeding days — because of their lack of faith and devotion — hundreds of mujahidin armed to the teeth were unable to confront the Russians and their puppet regime and to occupy even a simple enemy post. Nevertheless, with the devotion and selflessness of the true mujahidin and despite the many problems and difficulties that our Muslim nation faced, America was unable to hatch this plot as it wished and to destroy the selflessness and devotion of our mujahidin. And finally, this plot, too, failed.

Another plot by America against the Afghan mujahidin was the creation of charity foundations and organizations among the emigrants and the mujahidin at home and abroad. The major objective of these institutions was to extend direct assistance by America and other Western countries under the label of charity and relief organizations in the various fields of medicine, agriculture, and even construction, education, and so on in a bid to attract experts from among the mujahidin to these institutions and to distance them from the jihad.

Through these institutions, the Americans extended food assistance and high wages in order to distract the educated Muslims who were committed to Islam and to isolate and purge them from the ranks of the jihad, the war, and the struggle and to keep them busy with relief and materialistic activities. Although the Americans succeeded in this effort to a certain extent, they were unable to completely purge the expert and mujahid forces from the ranks of the jihad and the struggle and to attract them toward America.

In addition to all this, the UN's plans and efforts and the Geneva peace talks on Afghanistan, as well as other UN programs on Afghanistan; the creation of dozens of news and propaganda disseminating centers; calling on, encouraging, or even threatening some people and renowned commanders of Afghan mujahidin; purchasing and gathering the Stinger missiles from Afghanistan; creating various spontaneous groups; granting asylum to the high-ranking officials of the regimes of Zaher Shah and Daud Shah; supporting the deposed Zaher Shah and the pro-Western Afghans, and so on can all be listed as America's persistent and futile plots against the Muslim Afghan mujahidin and as America's blatant intervention in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. But none of these plots were able to repulse the raging anger of Afghanistan's revolution and Islamic jihad; and finally, thanks to the lofty efforts of the mujahidin, all of them were defeated one after the other.

In view of the above, it is at this sensitive and historic juncture that America wants to call on the Afghan groups and to hatch yet another dangerous plot against the mujahidin, the Muslim nation, the jihad, and the Islamic revolution of Afghanistan. With its blatant intervention in Afghanistan's domestic affairs it is trying to prevent the consolidation of the "Hope" peace and understanding pact between Hekmatyar and Rabbani, which is a source of hope for the long-suffering Afghan nation and which will pave the way for peace, understanding, and dialogue among all the strata and groups. What the nation and the Afghan Muslim mujahidin want the leaders of the jehadi groups to do is never to fall into the trap of American plots and to avoid doing something for which they will be held responsible in the future of Afghanistan by the Islamic nation and ummah.

We are confident that in view of their jehadi experiences and their revolutionary alertness, which they have gained through many years of armed jihad against the aggressors and foreigners, the Afghan Muslims will thwart the latest American plot and will neutralize it like they have all past dangerous plots. God willing...

Iran: Daily Warns Relations With Egypt Could Bring Isolation

NC3007225696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 20 Jul 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Foreign Policy and the Criterion for Isolation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

The joint American-Zionist propaganda is making immense efforts to portray the Islamic Republic of Iran's system as being in isolation. Is this the truth?

The answer to this question would assist the foreign policymakers immensely in adopting correct and prin-

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cipled decisions with regard to an approach to international issues, especially in forging foreign relations. Of course the important point is, what are the connotations of "isolation" in the eyes of those who deal with foreign policy? Hence a precise definition of isolation can provide a correct and intelligent response to the question.

Having an embassy or a large number of diplomatic representations outside the country are not the right criteria for indicating a remarkable presence on the international political scene even though these representations can be a wonderful means for attaining foreign policy objectives.

If a country has an active foreign policy and is able to have an impact on actions and reactions in the world, such a country is not to be considered isolated even if it is not at the top as regards the multiplicity of its foreign representations abroad.

The fact is that the Islamic Republic of Iran's system right from its inception and until now has been actively present on the international scene despite the abundance of hindrances created by the enemies of the Islamic Revolution. It has been able to influence the political actions and reactions of the world. This distinction stems from the extraordinary popularity of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran — may God be pleased with him — among the nations and the fortitude, resistance, and the vigilance of the Iranian people in various areas.

The same is true of the post-Imam period, due to the steadfastness of the great leader of the revolution his eminence, Ayatollah Khamene'i in combating the United States and Zionism. These factors so far have been responsible for the impact that the Islamic Republic of Iran has had on the international political scene.

What is important is that the same steadfastness and perseverance in the struggle against the United States and international Zionism — which are cancerous tumors in the contemporary world — have resulted in the proliferation of this spirit of combating the United States and the Zionist regime in the world and has metamorphosed into an important value in the political life of countries (nations and governments).

Today, we are witnessing the daily-increasing anti-U.S. and anti-Zionist struggles in various parts of the world. The increasing efforts on the part of the United States and Zionism to portray the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran as isolated is precisely because they sense danger and know full well that the emergence and spread of anti-U.S. and anti-Zionist sentiments in the world are rooted in the Islamic Revolution.

In view of this clear reality, the response to the aforementioned question is that not only is the Islamic Republic of Iran not isolated, it is in the process of reaping the fruits of its years of resistance to the satanic powers and putting the United States and Zionism on the defensive. We have achieved this bounty on the path of adherence to our principles. We should bear in mind that it is only in continuation of this path that we will be able to safeguard the honor of this revolutionary system and nation.

Unfortunately, a certain trend can be perceived at times in the performance of the foreign policy echelons of our country which is not in conformity with those principles. Becoming enamored of relations with spurious and rootless governments such as the Mubarak regime in Egypt and inattention to the fact that they are alienated from the Muslim nations and are despotic regimes ruling over the people are blatant blunders and lucid examples of this incongruity.

The position that the Islamic Republic of Iran's system enjoys among the nations is the blessing of the leadership and resistance of the people. One must not tarnish it with a performance that does not conform with the principles and criteria of the revolution. Those who think that the Islamic Republic of Iran needs relations with such subservient and rootless regimes such as that of Mubarak, are under the influence of the U.S. and Zionist propaganda and contend that we are isolated. They believe that we should make efforts to forge relations with such regimes to extricate ourselves from isolation!

It is possible that the intentions of such individuals may be altruistic, but their problem is that they do not correctly understand the connotations of isolation. They do not know that having relations with regimes that are already isolated from their people will be the most explicit sign of isolation.

Iran: 'Deep Rift' Between Egyptian People, Government Viewed

NC3107165396 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 20 Jul 96 p 16

[Political commentary "Mubarak—Israel's Reliable Broker"]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the prevailing practices consistently being pursued by the Americans is to allocate special priority to the Zionist regime's stance in the region. The Americans are seeking to direct political developments in the Middle East on the basis of the interests of the Zionist regime. These interests constitute an axis and index outside which no action or reaction can take place in the region.

It has been repeatedly observed that the Americans are the ones who have coordinated their stance on regional

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and even international issues with the Zionists, not vice versa. This phenomenon is a sort of union of the interests of despotic Israel and the United States in the Middle East. The strength and power of this union is such that every time any high level American sets foot in the region with the aim of forging ahead with the compromise talks, selling weaponry to Middle Eastern countries, or forging U.S. relations with any of these countries, he first visits Israel as the primary destination.

The reason is, as has been mentioned already, that no other government in the Middle East has any strategic alliance with the United States to the extent that the Zionists ruling over occupied Palestine have, and therefore, Israel's behavior in the Middle East is constantly considered an index or model in the Middle East by the Americans.

At present, this phenomenon exists even inside the Middle East in relations between Israel and Egypt, that is, the Zionists are also in favor of Egypt's performance being construed as an exemplar for emulation by the Arab regimes of the region. This has been the heartfelt wish of Cairo for the past six years, when the Middle East compromise trend was initiated. It is for this reason that with the thawing of the ice in relations between Israel and the Arab regimes and the ripping off of the veils of political and cultural chastity and accountability, Cairo was the first stopover of the late Yitzhaq Rabin, the Zionist regime's prime minister. Even today, Netanyahu has chosen Egypt as the first geographical stop in his visit to the region.

The policy and performance by the Cairo regime in recent years, and especially since the convocation of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference in the month of Esfand [20 February-20 March] to date, has been such that the extremist Likud faction is also a supporter and defender of this policy and is in favor of Cairo's approach to Middle East issues becoming a model for the political behavior of regional regimes.

From Netanyahu's perspective, Cairo's pioneering effort to make the Arab governments conform to the situation resulting from the extremist Likud faction coming into power in occupied Jerusalem and the warm and cordial hospitality of this regime for the leader of this extremist faction are both factors with the same political implication. The aim of this policy is to deceive the Arabs in order to disarm them before Israel. Mubarak is Israel's broker in the Middle East today. Not only has he not moved away from the Zionists, he has become extremely close to them.

He has not only not distanced himself from the Camp David accord; he has successfully been able to take stupendous strides in promoting the message and objectives of the accord in the Middle East.

The massive opposition by the people and the solidarity of the various sections of Islamic society in Egypt to the visit by the criminal ringleader of the Likud faction to cairo should be a lesson and example to all friends and foes of Israel. Binyamin Netanyahu's visit to Cairo, which can be considered his first in the region, encountered extensive opposition by various parties, publications, intellectuals, parliamentary deputies, workers' syndicates, and the various strata of Egyptian society. The Israeli flag was set ablaze outside the Israeli embassy in Cairo at the time of Netanyahu's arrival in the country.

The government welcome for Netanyahu's visit and the fury and hatred of the people indicates a deep rift in the perspectives of the people and government of Egypt regarding the despotic Israel. This rift cannot be healed by propaganda, threats, or the incarceration of the people, and this deepening or intensification will ultimately undermine the foundations of the Camp David regime of Cairo, as no government can be successful in combating its own people.

Iran: Kuwaiti Official—Iran's Role in Security 'Crucial'

LD0108110496 Tehran IRNA in English 0801 GMT 1 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug. 1, IRNA — Kuwaiti charge d'affaires to Tehran, 'Ali Ahmad al-Dafir, praised Iran's crucial role in establishment of peace and security in the Persian Gulf, the Persian daily 'Iran' wrote Thursday [1 August].

In an interview with the daily on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti diplomat appreciated the wise stand adopted by the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

He further told the paper that Baghdad should comply with the U.N. resolutions.

Unfortunately, he noted, Baghdad has not yet implemented the U.N. resolutions issued following its aggressions against Iran and Kuwait.

Undoubtedly, Iraq is responsible for bringing foreign forces to the Persian Gulf region and creating tension in the whole region, he emphasized.

The Kuwaiti diplomat stressed that the regional peace and security should be established through cooperation of regional states.

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On fate of Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraqi prisons, al-Dafir stated that there are official documents proving that there are some 625 Kuwaiti POWs still detained in Iraq.

On Tehran-Kuwait friendly relations, he announced that a Kuwaiti delegation from the Ministry of Finance is to arrive in Tehran soon to finalize the memorandum of understanding on joint investments.

Iran: RESALAT Evaluates Jordan's Stance on Peace Process

NC2907153096 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 20 Jul 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "King Husayn—Efforts To Emerge From Isolation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] King Husayn dispatched Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti to Cairo last week in order to coordinate the stances of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt. Al-Kabariti later left for the occupied territories for a meeting with Binyamin Netanyahu.

King Husayn has a difficult assignment on his hands in order to create a balance in relations with the Arab leaders who have been assailed by doubts regarding their ties with Israel.

A prominent Western diplomat stated: This is a very difficult year for Jordan and it is possible King Husayn may have to face a great deal of overt criticism even on the ministerial level.

Netanyahu's victory in the month of Khordad [22 June-22 July] was reflected only slightly in official Jordanian circles but elicited a very intense reaction in other Arab countries. Jordan wished to preempt all others in jumping on the peace bandwagon, assuming that others would follow suit, but it seems to be a solitary traveler now.

Yasir 'Arafat, the PLO chief, is apprehensive that Netanyahu's intransigent stance may culminate in halting the Palestinians midway on their path, the aim of which is the establishment of a Palestinian government. Syria foresees that the talks for forging a deal with Israel will be resumed and believes that if Netanyahu insists on not returning the Golan Heights, talks will be futile.

So far, Jordan's reaction has been similar to that of the United States in seeking to project to others that there is a difference between Netanyahu's words and deeds. After his talks with Netanyahu, al-Kabariti stated that Netanyahu is committed to the peace process.

At the Cairo conference, King Husayn joined the camp of Arab countries that are more inclined toward normalization of relations with the Zionist regime if Netanyahu adheres to the peace process. He is now making efforts to minimize criticism of the Zionist regime. If he could effect a compromise acceptable to those Arabs who say that they have not gained anything from the peace process, King Husayn's efforts to create a balance in the relations between the Zionist regime and Arab countries would be very easy.

Most of the Arabs believe that the peace process has greatly strained Jordan's relations with Arab countries such as Syria and Iraq. Hence Israel's efforts to keep the Palestinians' administration of their affairs in limbo, which has made Jordan rather apprehensive.

Netanyahu's election has aroused concern among Palestinians regarding a possible deal between Israel and Jordan over the West Bank. However, this doubt does not indicate that King Husayn's commitment has wavered and that he will no longer negotiate with the Zionist regime.

Iran: Paper Stresses Importance of Unity Among Muslim Countries

LD3007170596 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 25 Jul 96 p 2

[Unattributed commentary: "Peace and Security Are Essential for Development"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani yesterday said that internal security has provided the groundwork for development to proceed at an unprecedented pace.

In fact peace and security are the two prerequisites for sound development in any part of the world. Internal security and regional peace are inducements for foreign investment in long-term projects in the country.

Iran's internal security and the region's stability depend on two factors — the country's strength and ability to defend itself and the guaranteed cooperation of regional neighbours in times of stress.

If a country is secure no country in the world will dare covet its resources, more importantly its territory. Iran's geopolitical importance, on the one hand, and its resources, on the other, arouse the envy of enemies who naturally aim to share in the God-given blessings.

Lacking the popular support of the masses, the Shah's regime had made the security of the country dependent on the help of the United States. Since the 1960s, the Shah of Iran was determined [to be] an appropriate stooge to be used as a "regional influence" behind Nixon's doctrine of safeguarding the interests of the United States. Ironically huge amounts of petrodollars were funneled from Tehran to the US and other Western

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countries to arm Iran for safeguarding US interests in the region.

The indisputable fact is that after the Islamic revolution Iran's military expenditure has been one of the lowest in the region, a fact which proves that Tehran does not entertain any expansionist plans in the region.

It is also plain obvious that Iran is the region's most influential country. No country will deny Iran's regional preeminence. Nonetheless, Iran has demonstrated time and again its goodwill towards other countries by way of offers for cooperation. The generosity that it displays in going out of its way to help less privileged neighbours cannot be overemphasized.

The focal point of Iran's foreign policy is that regional security can best be achieved if it is left solely in the hands of regional countries. Unfortunately, it is a policy hard to sell to some of its neighbours which are inclined to rely on outside help instead of claiming the unwavering and tested strength of Islam.

As Muslim brothers, we must never forget that Allah is our refuge and we can count on the unity of our Muslim brothers to maintain security within and outside our borders. "In unity there is strength" is a motto we can live by to encourage cooperation among ourselves and which is the best guarantee to security and peace in the region.

Iran invites its neighbours to test its sincerity and put an end to any excuse for allowing foreign powers to be in the region.

Iran: Article Stresses Need for Cooperation in Gulf Region

LD0108115296 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 25 Jul 96 pp 4, 13

[Unattributed article from the "Economic Review Column": "The Need for Regional Cooperation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In recent years the Persian Gulf region has become more militarized and more conflict-ridden than one or two decades ago. This is due to the region's strategic, economic and political significance in international political fora.

The Persian Gulf harbours nine countries and almost 110 million people live in the region. The countries around the Persian Gulf are Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen and Bahrain.

The region is rich in several important raw materials, minerals and marine resources. The availability of oil and gas has tremendously enhanced the Persian Gulf importance.

Currently the Persian Gulf holds around 65 per cent of the world's proven recoverable oil reserves of about one trillion barrels. The region's oil output at present amounts to about 18.5 million barrels per day which is about 27 per cent of the world total reserves. It is now universally acknowledged in the petroleum industry that non-OPEC production has already peaked, and that the growing demand for oil, especially in the Asia Pacific region can only be met in the future by OPEC member countries particularly the larger producers in the Persian Gulf region such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. Apart from oil, the Persian Gulf gas reserves are also very significant on a global scale. The Persian Gulf region is, at present, second in the world, after the group of countries in the former Soviet Union, with a total deposit of about 40 per cent of the world's total gas reserves.

Although the Persian Gulf region possesses about 30 per cent of the total world known gas reserves, it produces no more than six per cent of world production. In fact, Persian Gulf has the lowest gas production relative to its reserves. In 1992, this region produced only 0.3 per cent of its gas reserves, the lowest in the world, while the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe produced 1.4 per cent, Western Europe 3.5 per cent and North America 8.6 per cent. In other words, the region's capability of playing a greater role in the future energy production is by far more than the present figures.

At present, Iran is heavily dependent on the Strait of Hormuz, located at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, for most of her trade with the outside world.

Unlike Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait which use oil pipelines to transfer part of their crude oil through neighbouring countries or to the Red Sea, all of Iran's export oil and the bulk of her trade with the outside world must pass through the Strait of Hormuz. It is for this reason that safeguarding the freedom of navigation in this waterway is vital for our country's security and prosperity.

For deterring any attempt by a hostile extra-regional power to block the Strait, the Iranian islands at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, including the two Tunbs and Abu-Musa, are of great military value to Iran.

In summary, security in the Persian Gulf are particularly important, both for Iran and for the rest of the Persian Gulf states. However, the regional countries must recognize that Iran, as the leading regional might today, can play the most important role in maintaining the security and stability in the area. The fact is that, poor regional cooperation in the past has led to the growing outside intervention in the region and thus the creation of tension and unrest in the area.

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Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly called for stronger ties in the Persian Gulf region where cooperation among countries bordering this waterway could serve the interests of all the countries in the region as well as the rest of the world.

Iran: 'Balanced Development' Should Replace 'Brinkmanship' Policy

LD3007170296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 27 Jul 96 p2

[Unattributed commentary: "25-Year Development Plan, Landmark in Construction Era"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani has instructed the government officials to prepare a development plan to be implemented over a period of 25 years.

Such a decision by the president marks a milestone in the history of Iran's development, for this is the first time a 25-year development plan is going to be drawn up, envisaging the country's development into a far future.

Indeed, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has proved to be a pioneer in the area of construction as well as in many other areas. He has been rightly given the epithet "the standard-bearer of the construction movement of Iran".

In view of the significant and historic hallmarks of such a long-term plan, [a] few points should be taken into consideration by the government executives while drawing up the blueprint.

There is ample experience hidden behind the First Five-Year Development Plan, if one is aware enough to notice it. The plan was approved by most of the Fourth Majles MPs. However, at the time of the Fifth Majles elections, the same MPs launched a campaign against the construction trend and development plans, saying the plans were aimed at development without social justice.

Undoubtedly, there are certain valid points in their criticism of the country's development plans. Notwithstanding, they are equally to blame for those flaws since it was they who approved the plan and supervised its implementation. In other words, the people's representatives were vested with the authority to carefully examine the development plan and modify it as needed, if they believed that it would undermine social justice. If it is assumed that they did so, their criticizing the government policies on construction will be irrational. Otherwise, it means that they have also failed to perform their duties properly.

In order to ensure that the development plans will not be carried out at the cost of social justice, both of the newly formed factions in [the] Majles, Majma'-e Hezbollah [Hezbollah Association] and Namayandegan-e Hezbollah [Hezbollah Deputies] should assign their experts to the task of drawing up the 25-Year Development Plan. Brinkmanship policy will not help the process of nation-building.

It is not desirable to witness the gap between the rich and the poor still getting wider. Nor is it pleasant to see giant skyscrapers mushrooming beside dilapidated houses in the capital and other big cities. The villagers must no longer suffer, and in some cases die, from the lack of basic health facilities, with a portion of the society spending huge sums of money on luxuries.

What is desirable is balanced development, building a prosperous Iran while providing equal opportunities for all citizens and enabling them to enjoy their established rights.

Iran: Parliamentary Affairs — Majles Summer Recess Dates Given

LD2907172796 Tehran HAMSHAHRI in Persian 24 Jul 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Behind the Majles Podium"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Majles met in closed session 23 July. At the session, Dr. Gudarz Eftekhar Jahromi, presidential adviser and the person in charge of pursuing the disputes between the United States and Iran, presented a report to the deputies about receiving compensation from the United States for the downing of the Airbus passenger aircraft.

It is being said that a group of Majles deputies believe that negotiation with the United States and the issue of compensation should have been raised in the Majles first and that the government should have embarked on this initiative only after receiving Majles approval, whereas the government believes that this was a merely executive matter and that there was no need to raise it in the Majles and obtain the approval of deputies. It seems that the government has consulted the Guardian Council on this issue and that the council agrees with the government. Movahhedi-Savoji [Majles presidium member] has said: Eftekhar Jahromi is to present his case to the Foreign Policy Committee and the Judicial Affairs Committee, and, if his explanations are found to be insufficient, the Majles will use the legal levers at its disposal.

Yesterday, one of the deputies for Khorasan said the following as a point regarding internal regulations: Following the protest by the deputies for Khorasan to the dismissal of the governor-general of Khorasan, the interior minister appeared before the Majles Councils

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and Internal Affairs Committee and his explanations were found to be unconvincing. He requested that the interior minister acknowledge receipt of a question from the deputies and appear on the floor of the Majles.

It was planned that one of the members of the Majles presidium would give an interview to reporters yesterday about the way in which vehicles are allocated to Majles deputies, but, in the end, it turned into an exclusive interview with the [Islamic Republic News] agency.

The Majles summer recess will begin on 9 Mordad [30 July] and continue until 8 Shahrivar [29 August]. The first Majles session after the recess will be held on 11 Shahrivar [1 September].

Iran: Paper Comments on Controversy Over Esfahan Elections

LD3107134996 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 27 Jul 96 pp 1,11

[Unattributed commentary: "Esfahan's Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Two things are said about the Esfahan elections, one old and one new. The old has to do with the annulment of the fifth term Majles elections, which, although worth examining in its own place, is no longer appropriate as a topic of general discussion in such places as the mass media. The new has to do with the mid-term elections that are due to be held there, along with a number of other constituencies.

For some time now, things have been said about the mid-term elections in Esfahan and, recently, these remarks have found their way into some newspapers as well. The thing that has been said in this regard is that the Guardian Council is saying that the governor-general and a number of other officials in Esfahan behaved in such a way in the course of the fifth term elections that, as long as they remain in office, it will be impossible to hold the mid-term elections. On the other hand, it is being said that the government believes, for its part, that the idea that the Guardian Council holds that the governor-general must be changed by the government in order for the elections to be held constitutes a kind of interference by the Guardian Council in the work of the executive branch and the government will not allow such a thing.

The point that is of great importance here is that the conclusion can be drawn from all of these remarks that the mid-term elections will not be held in Esfahan as long as the two sides insist on maintaining their own position. If this does indeed become the case, it will be the system that will suffer and it cannot by any means be true that the Guardian Council and the government would be pleased with such a state of affairs. The people who hold office in these two important bodies are extremely wise people who understand the gravity and sensitivity of this matter, and will not consent to the infliction of such harm.

The principled way to resolve this problem is for the Guardian Council to present to the government its reasons and evidence demonstrating that the officials of this province interfered in the elections and for the government to examine the matter in keeping with the responsibility vested in it. It goes without saying that, if the government reaches the conclusion that the province's officials committed offences, it will not tolerate their continued presence in positions of responsibility. On the other hand, if the government does not reach such a conclusion after examining the issue, it will have convincing reasons to present to the Guardian Council and the Guardian Council, for its part, will act in accordance with its responsibility regarding the holding of the mid-term elections in Esfahan, at the same time as in other constituencies.

It seems as if raising the issue in interviews and at the level of the general public is, more than being aimed at informing the public, a kind of effort at propaganda insinuations for factional purposes. The most worthy thing would be for the wise people to fulfil their responsibility, resolve the matter with wisdom at the earliest opportunity and block the way to any further factional propaganda abuse.

Iran: Column Views Delay in Majles By-Election

LD3007210196 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 25 Jul 96 p 14

[From the "View" column by M. Mohajeri: "Delay in the By-Elections and the Existing Impressions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with a publication Hojjat al-Eslam Movahhedi-Savoji, a member of the Majles Council and Internal Affairs Committee, referred to the delay in the majles by-election, which is apparently due to disputes between the honorable Guardian Council and the executive authorities.

There is no doubt that the executive authorities gave the necessary qualifications and, more importantly, are capable of conducting the affairs with the utmost impartiality. Some of the appointments and dismissals which took place at various levels some time before the election, were signs of the top officials being particular about appointing honest and impartial people even though, justifiably or unjustifiably, there was some criticism of those actions. However, that does not mean that the honorable Guardian Council should wait until

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certain executive managers are changed before holding the elections. Although there is no doubt that the request was made with absolutely good intentions, it seems that it was interference by the legislative branch (the Guardian Council) in the executive branch. The Guardian Council should perform its duty which is to vet authoritatively and accurately even if it is forced to declare the results null and void for the second and third time due to irregularities in the elections. It is up to the three branches of the government, particularly the Guardian Council as the guardian of the Constitution, to perform their legal duties and not go beyond the law.

Clearly the Guardian Council would not deem it appropriate to delay the elections because a certain person is affiliated to the executive machinery but it is the performance of those people in the election for the Fifth Majles which has brought the Guardian Council to that conclusion. Nevertheless, the insistence by that body on the necessity to change the executive managers in the provinces gives rise to certain impressions whose propagation is not worthy of the Guardian Council. It could also weaken the executive branch.

In any case, if the election officials are changed on the wishes of the Guardian Council, undoubtedly new appointments cannot be made without the consent of that council. That practically turns the Guardian Council into election executors, a phenomenon which is fundamentally contrary to the essence of the Constitution and the interests of the system.

Iran: Worker Received Level 2 Radiation in Power Plant Accident

LD3107183096 Tehran IRNA in English 1653 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 31, IRNA — One worker was exposed to radiation as result of negligence of safety rules, after a radioactive source used for industrial radiology was left unattended for some two hours at the combined cycle power plant in Gilan Province on July 24, it was announced here on Wednesday [31 July].

According to the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, a worker on the site received level 2 (IAEA scale) radiation dose due to non-observance of safety rules and now is under full medical care.

It said that safety personnel on learning of the accident placed the radioactive source back in its shield, and that all safety and radiation protection measures have been taken by inspectors of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

"The result of the blood tests and clinical examination of all concerned workers and technical staff at the site are normal, hence no one has been exposed to radiation, except the above mentioned worker," added the statement.

The statement denied certain press reports that claimed 50 persons were affected by the radioactive leak.

Meanwhile, the Siemens company of Germany has issued a statement saying that none of its personel at the site were affected by the accident.

Iran: Paper Cites BBC on 'Unprecedented Pressure' on Dissenters

LD3107162996 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 25 Jul 96 p 12

[Unattributed report from the "Media World" feature: "Pressure"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a report, BBC radio [Persian Service] has claimed that pressure has increased on dissenting [degar andish] intellectuals and writers in Iran.

The radio claimed that several independent cultural publications have been banned recently and that other publications feel that they are under unprecedented pressure.

The BBC also referred to the broadcast of a series of programs by the Vision of the Islamic Republic of Iran under the title of "Identity," which attacks writers and political personalities in Iran each week. The BBC said: There is a concern in Iran that a number of officials within the government are trying to prevent independent cultural activities in the country.

The radio said: A number of experts in Iranian affairs believe that, after the recent elections in Iran, the conservative right-wing faction finds itself in a position where it has to increase control!!?

Iran: Official Says Economy Strong Enough To Withstand Sanctions

LD3107134296 Tehran IRNA in English 1229 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 31, IRNA — Iran has laid a firm foundation for its economic development to the effect that it can tolerate economic sanctions imposed on it, a senior official said Wednesday [31 July].

Deputy head of the Majles Commission on Oil Mohsen Yahyavi added that Iranian economy is now less dependent on oil than it was last year or two years ago.

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Yahyavi said that Iran imported over dlrs. 16 billion worth of goods in 1373, while the figure dropped to dlrs eight billion last year. He added that Iran's imports substantially decreased in wake of the inauguration of several industrial projects, including those relevant to petrochemical and aluminium.

Iran: Economic Council Approves Draft of Budget Bill

LD3107105996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the course of an Economic Council meeting chaired by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the draft of a circular on the budget bill for 1376 [year ending 21 March 1998] was reviewed and approved.

According to this circular, in continuation of the government's new economic policies, the 1376 budget bill will be devised on the basis of guidelines issued by the eminent leader on economic and financial discipline, the establishment of social justice, the elimination of poverty, and moving toward an economic system that will be free from reliance on crude oil exports.

Furthermore, the bill envisages the payment of subsidies on essential goods and medicines, will try to steer latent subsidies toward society's vulnerable strata, and strengthen the social welfare system.

In this meeting, Hamid Mirzadeh, vice president and head of the Plan and Budget Organization, announced: The trend of growth in the gross national product is still continuing. The GNP rate has grown from 1.6 percent in 1373 to 4.5 in 1374. Investment by the public sector in 1374 reached 95 percent of the sums projected by the plan.

Furthermore, the ratio of development-related credits to all categories of credits envisaged in the government's general budget has improved. This ratio has increased from 31.3 percent in 1374 to 41 percent in 1375.

The head of the Plan and Budget Organization added: At the end of 1374, the public revenue income account held 185.9 billion rials, which is the highest figure in the past 35 years.

Iran: President Asks Judiciary To Commute Attacker's Sentence

LD3107173696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has sent a letter to the head of the Judiciary foregoing his rights as the injured party regarding the person who tried to assassinate him in the shrine of Imam Khomeyni, God be satisfied with him.

Kurosh Nikakhtar, the person who has been sentenced to death by the Islamic Revolution Court for acting against national security and attempting to assassinate the president, sent a letter to the president asking for his pardon and forgiveness. In response to the request for amnesty by the assassin, Hashemi-Rafsanjani has written to the judiciary, saying: I forego my rights and, since the perpetrator has expressed repentance and has claimed that he has realized he made a mistake, I would like to help extend the life of the repentant person.

Iran: Commentary Criticizes Treatment of Journalists by Officials

LD3107151596 Tehran SALAM in Persian 24 Jul 96 p 2

[Commentary by Mansur Hoseyni: "The Problem Is the Story They Are Telling"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Last Monday [22 July], the esteemed president, addressing the staff of the headquarters in charge of organizing Government Week [starting on 23 August], made a number of important points within the context of his remarks on the subjects of informing the public about the realities of our country, and the importance of officials making efforts to disseminate information to our people. [passage omitted]

Our esteemed president placed a special emphasis on the importance of informing public opinion, and it is a fact that the public's greater awareness of various developments is in fact conducive to the creation of a happier and more optimistic society.

A society that knows its problems and their roots and is also aware that its officials are doing their very best to manage society's affairs will be a dynamic society with an inherent tendency for participation. In such a society, the grievance of each individual is the grievance of the officials, and the problems of the officials are not of a personal nature. Instead, each and every shortcoming is something that is felt and shared by each and every citizen of Iran, all of whom will endeavor to remedy it.

If this method came into practice, then people would trust their serving government and would tolerate the bitter hardships of the reconstruction era in the knowledge that sweet rewards await them at the end. But what a pity it is that in the opinion of some of the managers of our society, our people are God's gift and therefore should not be informed about the most natural and routine events and developments around them, until of course they hear about them from foreigners. Under

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these conditions, how can one expect our society not to be subjected to a bombardment of hostile and dastardly propaganda?

Indeed, as he [Rafsanjani] said, the media and their journalists have a grave mission due to their role as an intermediary and a link between public opinion and governmental organizations. This mission, however, can only be fulfilled when governmental organizations show some degree of regard for society and public opinion, and provide the media with news and information.

Newspaper journalists, posing as the most ordinary employee in a given government office, can obtain the most important news for their public. However, when the same journalists, whose pens work only for Iran and their hearts beat only for their homeland, introduce themselves as reporters when going up to the country's officials, they are treated like a foreign enemy who has come from abroad to seek confidential and classified information. These journalists are treated so unkindly by the sources of news and information that they actually start to become indifferent even towards the positive achievements of the state.

We would like to inform the esteemed president that press journalists as a group have been, and are being, treated really unkindly. They have experienced the worst of both worlds, in that they are targeted by both people and officials.

Officials want the press to merely indulge in reporting their positive performances and their illustrious achievements. On the other hand, people want us to point out problems and shortcomings and debate their solutions.

Finding these solutions is a process which requires correct figures and statistics which are unfortunately either non-existent or unavailable. Interviews, moreover, are very rarely possible. Worse still, our questions have to be faxed beforehand. If the questions are favored by the esteemed interviewee, he will answer them whenever he chooses. If, however, he decides against taking part, you will realize that that you have to give up your project after making 10 or 15 futile telephone calls to his office. At the end, you have no option but to forget the whole thing, especially as the topic in question will have become yesterday's news.

If we are seriously committed to the topic in question, then we just write our report with the explanation in the last paragraph that efforts by our reporter to interview such and such an official did not bear fruit.

This, by the way, is how all media gradually become alike. The news agency becomes the source of news, and the tired and disheartened reporter merely becomes the narrator of stories received from news agencies or public relations offices.

Now, under these conditions, how can an Iranian journalist use the present-day tools of his trade to portray a better picture of the political system? Moreover, can he hope to bring a degree of fairness to the way foreigners view the present realities of our country and adopt relevant decisions about them? Can they do these while they themselves face a mountain of problems on their route towards finding out about these realities?

Under the existing system, can one really expect the country's propaganda and publicity apparatus to achieve its deserved universalistic dimensions?

These all are the grievances of a group of people who deeply desire the development of Islamic Iran. A group of people whose hearts palpitate with the love of this land and are filled with joy and hope — like all officials — when they see the addition of even one single stone to the foundation of Iran's development and prosperity.

Indeed what is needed for the fulfillment of what the esteemed president expects is that officials working for different organizations should provide information about what goes on in the country. They must reflect the realities without being frightened of mentioning obstacles and shortcomings, even though they may themselves feel concerned about these problems. They should, furthermore, trust people — who are after all the rightful owners of this revolution. The end result of this trust and confidence is public participation and the mobilization of the national will to build a bright future in a developed and prosperous Iran. God Willing...

Iran: SALAM Readers' Questions, Answers on Various Issues

LD3107113896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 24 Jul 96 p 3

[Readers questions from "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Reader] Do you think it is possible that the daily JAHAN-E ESLAM or the weeklies BAHMAN and BAHAR or BAYAN magazine will resume publication? Or that the weekly PAYAM-E DANESHJU resumes publication just two weeks before the presidential elections and then stops publication?

SALAM: Of course nothing is impossible, however, it should be noted that death is a wolf which will come to every sheep in this herd... [paper's ellipsis]

[Reader] I am a student studying construction engineering and I am also a reader of SALAM. Unfortunately, there are changes in the paper that make its contents less important. Can SALAM be shaken by any wind?

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SALAM: It is possible that SALAM may not be shaken by such winds, but it is possible it will be uprooted.

[Reader] Why is the price of bread not the same everywhere in the city? Is it really impossible to determine the price and weight of a loaf of bread? [no reply from SALAM]

[Reader] We have contacted the daily SALAM several times about the rate of suicide attempts among the Kurdish Iraqi refugees living in Naghadeh, but none of our messages have been published. Is the "Hello SALAM" column not for the publication of people's ideas and viewpoints? How can we pass on our messages to officials? Can the editor in chief of the daily SALAM please give a reply if he decides to publish this message.

SALAM: We have asked the opinion of the Majles deputy representing Naghadeh and Ashnaviyeh. This is his comments:

Suicide has various causes and reasons. However, what is obvious is that those people with a weak will who face the slightest problem and obstacle normally resort to such an action, which does not please God.

Cases of suicide attempts have been reported among the Iraqi refugees in Naghadeh during the past year. However, they were admitted to hospitals, treated, and recovered. Only one case of a suicide attempt ended in death. At the same time, assessment and investigation show that most cases of suicide attempts are due to family problems. There were cases of suicide attempts among people who were suffering from cancer and rheumatism. They resorted to such actions because they could not bear the pressure and the pain. Naturally, the issue is not only linked to the Iraqi refugees. Similar incident may occur among the Iranians as well.

[Reader] To the editor in chief of the daily SALAM: Not publishing people's comments and messages in the "Hello SALAM" column is an action that will not please God. I wanted to say that since last year, salaries, concessions, and housing entitlement of a notable... [paper's ellipsis]

SALAM: According to the instruction of the commander of chief, the publication of any article about the military forces is prohibited. Therefore, we apologize to this group of our readers.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Nation To Ensure Its Concerns Covered in CTBT

BK0108033896 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Jul 96 p 10

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD (PPI) — A Foreign Office spokesman said here on Tuesday [30 July] Pakistan's decision to sign or not sign the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] would be taken at an appropriate time after finalisation of the text of the treaty and taking into account the position of other countries especially of South Asian region.

"The foremost consideration will be safeguarding our security interests which we alone will determine", the spokesman said while talking to the PPI [Pakistan Press International]. He said "Pakistan would ensure that all its concerns regarding the substantive and technical aspects of the CTBT were fully covered in the text of the treaty". Our position in the negotiations is guided by these concerns as well as the views of other friendly and non-aligned countries", he added.

It may be recalled that the conference on disarmament has already resumed consideration of the text of the CTBT in Geneva.

The spokesman reiterated that the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty must be both comprehensive and universal adding that the Entry-Into-Force (EIF) provisions of the treaty require ratification by all the nuclear weapons states and the nuclear capable states for it to become effective.

"If India decides not to ratify, it would have effectively sabotaged the treaty as it will not be enforceable", the spokesman said. He said Pakistan had urged the international community to persuade India to reconsider its position and join the international consensus on banning all nuclear test explosions and all other nuclear explosions.

"We have also made it adequately clear that the CTBT will have no meaning for South Asia if India is not brought on board", he said and added that the onus for effectively destroying this global initiative would rest on India if it chose not to sign the treaty.

Indian Foreign Minister I. K. Gujral had on Sunday [28 July] reaffirmed that his country was not prepared to accept the proposed CTBT in its present form. "The draft calls for India to abandon its option for nuclear arms which is not acceptable to us," Gujral said.

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Recalling India's announcement of June 20 last saying that "It will not sign the CTBT, but will not block the treaty", the spokesman said there had been some confusion in the media about the term "block" and "sign" adding that the text of the proposed treaty had to be adopted by consensus of all members of conference on disarmament before it could be submitted to UN General Assembly.

"A member not intending to sign the treaty may still allow the text to go forward by not objecting to its transmittal", he said and pointed out that if, however, a member casts a negative vote, the treaty would be effectively blocked.

He said India had initially stated that while it could not sign, it would not block the treaty adding that recent pronouncements, however, had been more ambiguous.

He said Pakistan, on its hand, had decided to remain engaged in the negotiations with a view to ensuring that the text of the treaty adequately met its concerns. Referring to Pakistan's position on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation, the spokesman said, "We support all efforts to promote non-proliferation, particularly in our region provided these are equitable and non-discriminatory".

He declared that there was no change in Pakistan's position in this regard. He recalled that Pakistan together with other nonaligned countries had consistently endeavor to promote the goals of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. In this context, he said the nonaligned summit held at Cartagena last year supported the total elimination of all nuclear tests without any exception and welcomed the efforts to conclude negotiations on CTBT by 1996.

Pakistan: Opposition Leader Notes 'Underhand Deal' With U.S.

BK0108033796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Jul 96 p 4

[Report by unidentified correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ABBOTTABAD — Compromising on the security of country, the government has made an underhand deal with the United States and is ready to sign CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty]. This was alleged by Leader of the Opposition and President of Pakistan Muslim League Mian Nawaz Sharif [PML-N] here while talking to local journalists after attending a meeting of NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] Councillors of PML(N).

He said that the statements issued in this respect by various spokesmen of Foreign Office, government and the prime minister herself gave further credence to the doubt that govt had already compromised on the issue of national security. He said that govt has been reiterating that decision to that effect would be taken at "appropriate time" whereas according to him entire nation had already decided to carry on with the nuclear policy of the country. He added that those who are willing to sign CTBT were not sincere with Pakistan.

PML(N) chief regretted that logic behind such statements by the government regarding a sensitive issue was evident and hence deplorable. He further added that nation is united against signing of CTBT draft by saying it would be suicidal for the country and its security.

Nawaz Sharif alleged that it was the manifesto of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] to sabotage the nuclear program of the country, and elimination of the poor instead of poverty whereas Muslim League he claimed was savior of this nation.

To a question, PML(N) chief reiterated his demand that the President should fulfill his constitutional obligations adding that for this purpose it was not mandatory on the opposition leader to call on the President. The President himself could review the economic, political situation very well, he added. Nawaz Sharif asked the President to play impartial role and stop being biased so as to save his image.

When asked as to how could he justify his demand of invoking Article 58-2 (B) for corruption charges, while four elected governments were removed by invoking this articles of the Constitution on similar charges whereas no corruption charges were proved in the court of law, he remarked that he was ready to face corruption charges in any court of law.

He maintained that it was Benazir against whom corruption charges were leveled and references filed. He went on to say that with a stroke of pen all the references were set aside. He said to curb the corruption he was all-out for setting up independent judicial commission.

Earlier, addressing PML(N) provincial council meeting, Nawaz Sharif vowed to continue his struggle against what he termed fascist, corrupt, and inept govt. He said that a grand opposition awami [party] march would bring the change as entire nation was fed up by the loot and plunder of the govt. He said if elected to power his govt would hold accountable all the politicians and bureaucrats who have held responsible position since 1947. Those who were found guilty, he added would be sent behind bars for twenty years, in addition to forfeiture of their properties. Mian Nawaz Sharif further said that all such properties would be auctioned to pay country's debts.

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Earlier, Pir Sabir Shah was re-elected as PML(N) president unanimously by show of hands by the party councillors. His name was proposed by show of hands by the party councillors. His name was proposed by PML(N) MPA [Member of Provincial Assembly], Anwar Kamal Marwat whereas Yousaf Ayub, Rehmat Salam and Iqbal Jhagra seconded his name for presidentship Sar Anjam Khan was re-elected as party's provincial secretary general. Meeting of the provincial council also elected 112 councillors for the central council which would meet in Islamabad on Aug 19.

Those who addressed the meeting included Pir Sabir Shah and Sar Anjam Khan. Also present on the occasion were PML(N) central secretary general, Senator Sartaj Aziz, Joint Secretary, Sardar Mehtab Ahmad Khan MNA [Member of National Assembly], MNAs, Sardar Mohammad Yousaf, Nawabzada Salahuddin Saeed, Prince Nawaz Khan Alai, and Provincial and local leadership of the party.

Pakistan: Bhutto Comments on Move To Destabilize Government

BK0108033296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Federal Cabinet has been expanded with the induction of eight ministers and seven ministers of state. President Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari administered the oath of office to the new ministers and ministers of state at a ceremony in Islamabad this afternoon. [passage omitted]

Later, when asked by reporters to comment on the opposition leader's statement about destabilizing the government and the formation of a 14-party alliance for this purpose, the prime minister said she holds Nawaz Sharif in high esteem and has invited him for talks several times. She said her government has been elected as a result of a free and fair elections under the supervision of a neutral caretaker government. The slogans of lawlessness, corruption, and rising prices being raised by the opposition are not new. During Nawaz Sharif's rule, inflation rate had increased from 5 to 12 percent, but we have succeeded in bringing this rate down to 10 percent. About corruption, she said Nawaz Sharif and his ministers had borrowed 14 billion rupees from banks, but none of the ministers of the present government has ever taken any loan from banks.

About the law and order situation, the prime minister said Army was sent to Karachi during the rule of the previous government. Her government has foiled the conspiracy to hold Pakistan to ransom because of the Karachi situation.

Pakistan: Bhutto Comments on Cabinet Expansion, Hints at Reshuffle

BK3107151296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Federal Cabinet has been expanded with the induction of eight ministers and seven ministers of state. The president, Sardar Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, administered the oath of office to the new ministers and ministers of state at a ceremony in Islamabad this afternoon. [passage omitted]

Later, talking to newsmen, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said the expanded cabinet representing different political parties will speed up development work with the cooperation of hard-working and honest people to turn Pakistan into a great country. She said the parties joining the government now include PPP [Pakistan People's Party], PML-J [Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo group], PQP [Pakhtoonkhwa Qaumi Party], BNM [Balochistan National Movement]-Mengal Group, and Hizb-i-Jihad. She described it as a medium-size cabinet and said it would be further expanded after Senate elections in March next year. Answering a question, the prime minister said the portfolios of the new ministers will be announced later tonight or tomorrow. She also said that portfolios of some of the existing ministers will also be changed and indicated reshuffling of bureaucracy.

Pakistan: MQM Chief Hails Strike, Asks Government To Resign

BK3107110596 Karachi AMN in Urdu 22 Jul 96 pp 1, 5

[Unattributed Report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Karachi, 21 July (AMN News) — Altaf Hussain, the leader of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement [MQM], has wholeheartedly thanked all truth-loving people of Sindh — mothers, sisters, elders, traders, industrialists, transporters, workers, shopkeepers, teachers, lawyers, students, intellectuals, and people from all spheres of life — for staging a total, historic strike and protest rallies at the request of nine opposition parties, including the MQM. He said that by fully participating in the strike, the population — from all sectors of society and all schools of thought — has expressed its lack of confidence in the government and proved that the present government has lost the confidence of the people and that it has no right whatsoever to cling to power. He said the government's fascist, autocratic tactics have caused serious disquietude and anguish among all sectors of society. Transporters have been forced to go on strike to seek redress for their

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grievances. Paramedical staff and doctors are observing "black day." Rising prices and corruption have put the common man in great difficulty. Muhajir villages are being surrounded and innocent Muhajir are being murdered and arrested. Tribal peoples are being made to fight one another in Balochistan. Innocent civilians are being killed in bomb blasts in the Punjab, and the worst vindictive actions are being taken against opposition parties. Nevertheless, the government is bent on clinging to power, making tall claims of its so-called love for democracy and for progress and prosperity for the nation.

The MQM chief said that if the government had even the slightest love for democracy or respect for democratic and moral values, it would have resigned long ago. He asked the government to resign forthwith — respecting the wishes of the people and admitting its incompetence and charges of corruption against it — so that the nation can elect able and honest people to run the affairs of the state.

Pakistan: Economic Advisor—'No Economic Crisis' in Country

BK3107152496 Islamabad THE NATION in English 31 Jul 96 p 16

[Report by unidentified correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LAHORE — Ruling out any economic emergency like situation in the country, 'V.A. Jaffery Prime Minister's advisor on Economic Affairs on Tuesday [30 July] admitted that the government has failed to meet its targets for checking the inflation.

There is no economic crisis in the country, though there are some problems for which there should be consensus among various political parties like that on privatization, deregulation, and liberalization of economy.

He said so while addressing a seminar on "federal budget" organized by Management Association of Pakistan (MAP), which was also addressed by Editor The Nation Mr. Arif Nizami, Tariq Saeed Saigol President LCCI, Mian Tariq Mehmood, Dr. S.M. Naqi, Tariq Hameed and Sohail Hasan. He said that the budget deficit was 8 percent during the past regime, while expenditures crossed the limit, money supply shot up to 30 percent, and GDP was 2.3 percent.

He blamed the Nawaz Sharif government for not introducing the Farm Tax while present government introduced Wealth Tax on landlords and provinces were forced to tax the agriculture sector. He said that only Punjab was resisting this tax. Prime Minister's Advisor on Economic Affairs said that present government was also withdrawing the incentives and subsidies to the agriculture sector. V. A. Jaffery said tht Pakistan under article 8 of IMF was bound to rationalize the rupee worth in a phase manner, while on the other hand we have lowered the tariff so as to counter its negative effects on the economy. Ale further said that the foreign investment was on increase till according to the State bank of Pakistan, there has been a foreign investment of Rs [rupees] 3 billion dollars.

"Former Finance Minister Sartaj Aziz about two years back had said that budget would freeze the economic growth but we see that our economy grew and GDP is improving substantially', he said. He said that such statements are given to stop government's positive activities. PM's Advisor said that there has been no decline in the important industries while there has been increase in the exports of yarn and cloth.

Though there was little decline in the exports of ready-made garments, hosiery etc. Editor The Nation Mr. Arif Nizami in his observations on federal budget said that current budget was harsh, and government officials were ignoring the anguish and grievances of general public. Mr Nizami said that due to various government policies Pakistan was on the verge of economic disaster, as economic activity was at a stand still and the productions were declining.

He said that country's major economic sectors transport, textile, traders were on strike, while others were planning to follow them. Mr. Arif Nizami was dissatisfied with the poor performance of export industries even when Pak-Rupee value was slashed heavily in the mini budget of October last, in which Rs 18 billion taxes were imposed. "It in fact resulted in swelling the trade deficit and budget deficit, was above 5. 4 percent," he said. With this gloomy economic scenario even the IMF was not satisfied.

Mr Arif Nizami challenged the government inflation figures, saying it was much on higher side. While criticizing the unjust taxation system, Mr. Nizami said that the agriculture sector has been excluded from the tax net". In these circumstances how long can you persecute the already tax-netted trade and industry"? he questioned. He added that despite Pakistan's commitment with IMF for taxing the agriculture sector, there has been no development in this direction.

Editor THE NATION said on the one hand government has burdened the trade, industry and commoners with heavy taxes while on the other under the government patronage corruption has been institutionalized. In this regard, he referred to a cement manufacturing group case, which has been recently blessed with ten years tax exception [as published].

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He questioned the validity of 5 percent sales tax on newspapers. "It is just to harass the fourth pillar of the state, for its objectivity", he observed. Mr. Nizami said that in the name of documentation of economy, it was not fair to tax newspaper industry, as newspapers are already operating under complete documentation.

The Editor THE NATION Mr Arif Nizami said that government has withdrawn all subsidies on the IMF instructions, which has created serious socio-economic crisis, as the poor have become poorer while the rich were becoming richer.

Advisor Packages Group Tariq Hameed in his comments said that paper industry has been heavily taxed, which would result in the price hike of every thing that was made of paper. He supported the printers and publishers who have been taxed by 18 percent. He said that those tax payers who pay their full taxes also face problems at the hand of revenue collectors as his own group which contributed Rs 200 million was facing various problems.

While denying that there was economic crisis in the country, Jaffery said that in spite of heavy payment of 500 million dollar debt retirement, Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves were close to 1600 million dollars. He acknowledged that there was pressure on nation's assets due to financial obligations. While responding to questions from the MAP members, V.A. Jaffery said that the balance of payments would have gone worse had the government not brought down the budget deficit to 4 percent.

Pakistan: Bhutto—Punjab Bomb Blasts Suspects Arrested

BK3107160596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 31 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that those involved in bomb blasts in Punjab have been arrested and they have confessed their criminal activities. The prime minister said this after inaugurating Terraki bridge near Sohawa this morning. She said it has been proved from the confessions of the criminals that a foreign hand was involved and people were given money to place explosives at different places. She appreciated the cooperation of the people and said with their cooperation, investigations proved successful. Earlier, the prime minister unveiled the plaque of the bridge constructed by the National Logistics Cell on the GT Road at a cost of 77 million rupees. The bridge is 216 meters long and 17 meters wide. The new bridge has four lanes and is adequate to meet the requirement of heavy traffic.

The prime minister also met people who had come from far off places as well as a delegation of Pakistan Ulema [religious scholars] Council. The ulema praised the efforts of the prime minister for the economic development of the country, internationalization of the Kashmir issue, and for her service to the cause of Islam. They assured their wholehearted cooperation to her for the welfare, solidarity, and integrity of the country and strengthening of the democratic process. The prime minister was accompanied by the Punjab governor, Raja Saroop Khan, Chief Minister Sardar Mohammad Arif Nakai, PML-J [Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo] President Mr. Hamid Nasir Chatha, and Senior Punjab Minister Malik Mushtaq Ahmad Awan.

Later, the prime minister inaugurated the supply of Sui gas to Jhelum, which would cater to the needs of about 150,000 people. Addressing people on this occasion, she said that a long-standing demand of the people of the area has been met with the provision of gas.

Referring to the recent bomb blasts in several parts of the Punjab Province, she said two gangs were involved in these blasts. One was responsible for blasts in hospitals and airports, while the other in buses. She said those arrested were involved in the bomb blasts in the hospitals and airports.

Pakistan: Bombers Implicate India; Bhutto 'Leak' Criticized

BK0108101896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 1 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by unidentified correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LAHORE — In a major breakthrough the Lahore police have arrested two of the four suspects involved in five bomb blasts in Punjab, including blast at the Shaukat Khan Hospital and Lahore Airport.

The suspects in the police custody have been identified as Ishaq Mirasi, a science graduate and Shamshir Ali Shah. Two still at large suspects have been identified by the police as Ghafoor and Afzal.

The police got the vital breakthrough when Soay Asal police post in charge arrested a man, Ishaq Mirasi, suspecting his activities. Subsequent interrogations led the police to another member of the gang, Shamshir Ali.

Police said both have confessed bomb blast at Lahore Airport, Imran Khan's Shaukat Khanum Hospital, Okara, Lalamusa and Kharian. Police said the suspects confessed having received hefty amounts from India for carrying out blasts in Punjab. However, a police

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source said the premature leak by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was not going to help them in investigations as two main people were still at large.

Pakistan: Debt Servicing Effectively Reducing Foreign Aid

BK0108113396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 1 Aug 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by MI Lashkar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD — Pakistan received a cash balance of only $388 million as net transfers out of total foreign aid disbursements of $2,488 million in 1995-96, after deduction of debt servicing liability of $2,100 million. This is only 16 percent of gross disbursements.

According to official statistics available here, the net transfers have been reducing steadily as percentage of gross disbursements since 1960-61, when these were as high as 95 percent.

The decline is sharp in recent years. In 1991-92, the net transfers were only $853 million after deduction of debt servicing liability of $1,513 million or 36 percent of gross disbursements which were 92,366 million.

In 1992-93, they came down to 32 percent, in 1993-94 to 31 percent, in 1994-95 to 21 percent and now in 1995-96 to 16 percent.

The way the net transfers are coming down as percentage of gross disbursements, these would come down to zero in next five to six years, as the debt servicing liability is increasing every year, while gross disbursements of aid are reducing, although marginally.

Going further in time, net transfers would be negative, in ten years time hence, meaning that the amount of aid received alone would not be enough to make repayment of the loans and their interest. This means that additional amount of foreign loans is to be contracted to fulfill the debt servicing liability, if there is no trade surplus, as is today.

Meanwhile, the total outstanding foreign debt of the country has risen $23.1 billion in 1995-96 which is 35.7 percent of the GDP, while debt-serving liability is 3.2 percent of the GDP in the outgoing year. Likewise, in the same year, outstanding debt is 251 percent of total export earnings, while debt servicing liability is 23.2 percent of total export earnings in the same year.

The terms of foreign aid are also deteriorating year-by-year. In the earlier periods, a larger part of foreign aid was in the shape of grant or grant like assistance. Over the years, the proportion of grant in aid has steadily declined and has been replaced by hard term loans repayable in foreign exchange.

In percentage term, the share of grant and grant-like assistance in the total aid commitments was 80 percent during the First Five-Year Plan period (1955-60) which dropped sharply during the subsequent years, coming down to 9 percent in 1995-96.

Likewise, the disbursement of aid as percentage of total commitments has had a declining trend over time. The gross disbursement fell from 104 percent of total commitments in the Third Plan period (1965-70) to 60 percent in the Sixth Plan period (1 983-88). There were, however, some improvements in the subsequent years, but by 1995-96, it declined to 77 percent.

Pakistan: Chief of Army Staff—Army To Do Government's Bidding

BK0108112496 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 1 Aug 96 p 1, 9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD — The Chief of Army Staff, General Jehangir Karamat has said that in case of any political situation in the country, the army's position would be determined by the government and it would do what the government desired. He said the government was working according to the constitution and the best place to resolve differences, if any, is the parliament.

Talking after Chinese Armed Forces Day function on Wednesday [31 July], General Karamat said the government should allay the fear that history would repeat itself. He said there was no better institution than the parliament to settle differences.

Referring to the country's stand on CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty], Karamat said there was no question of Pakistan's signing the treaty, unless India did so. "We will take any decision after much consideration even if India signs CTBT". He said Pakistan's stand on vital national issues would remain unchanged. "Our stance on Kashmir and nuclear issues will not alter. Policy on matters of national interests will not undergo any modification," he asserted.

To a question he said Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto made a sincere dialogue offer to India, but efforts to start bilateral talks suffered a setback after India forged ahead with its decision to hold elections in the occupied valley. The army chief ruled out talks with India until Kashmir issue topped the talks agenda.

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Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Report Claims 54 Tigers Killed in Paranthan Operation

BK3107014596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 31 Jul 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Fifty four Tigers have been confirmed killed in the 'Sathjaya' Operation according to a Tiger transmission monitored in Colombo.

Reports said the Tigers were now fleeing in disarray as 'Sathjaya' troops having overrun Paranthan, were advancing and were poised to move further towards Kilinochchi.

Defence ministry sources said the escaping Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] were also taking with them their firearms and other equipment, having heavily mined the area to obstruct and hinder the forward march of the 'Sathjaya' troops.

Tiger transmissions have also said that the LTTE cadres in Paranthan who had been holding on in bunkers were abandoning their positions in Paranthan, the gateway to the larger southern town of Kilinochchi, having reported to their leaders that they could not withstand the far superior military and air cover of the troops.

Security forces have not suffered any casualties in Tuesday's [30 July] fighting having anticipated and exercising all precautions against mortar attacks by Tigers, official sources said. However, artillery and air cover continued to engage Tiger mortar positions.

Meanwhile, a military spokesman said the Tigers were trying to make out that civilians were still there in Paranthan and that they were affected. But he wished to say that since 1990 the Tigers are occupying the area after having forced the civilians to leave the area. They had set up explosive devices and laid anti-personnel mines in order to hinder movement of security forces.

A Colombo datelined Reuter report adds:

The Sri Lankan military push into the heartland of rebel territory on the northern mainland remained stalled on Tuesday as troops cleared mines and booby-traps from captured areas.

A military communique said clearing operations around the road junction town of Paranthan were time-consuming because it was an area that had been under the control of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) since 1990.

Government officials say the immediate target of the new operation, which followed the army's worst debacle in the 13-year ethnic war, was the town of Kilinochchi, just six km (four miles) south of Paranthan.

Before Friday's [26 July] start of an offensive in which ground troops are backed by tanks, helicopter gunships and Air Force bombers, there were some 150,000 people in Kilinochchi, which sits astride the main north-south highway from Colombo to Jaffna.

The LTTE had shifted its centre of operations there from the Jaffna peninsula after losing its main base in April and most of the people in Kilinochchi had fled there from the peninsula.

Now many of them are on the move again, fleeing the new army offensive carrying what food they can. Diplomats and aid workers said the situation was confused because many people did not know where to go for safety.

Diplomats said it may be that the army was deliberately delaying a move on the town until all civilians had left to prevent the repercussions of civilian deaths as they tried to restore control of the peninsula.

The Tamil Tigers have pulled back gradually under attack from the air and artillery. Fighting, apart from the first day of the military operation, had been light, military sources said.

Tuesday's military communique said troops around Paranthan were being harassed by rebel mortar fire, but it was causing no casualties.

Government forces attacked the mortar positions from the air.

It said rebel radio transmissions had named 54 fighters killed in the operation so far. The army says 17 soldiers were killed on the first day of the offensive.

The Tigers, fighting for an independent homeland for minority Tamils in the north and east, have also harassed troops on the Jaffna peninsula, which they ran as a mini-state until the army retook the area.

Military officials in Jaffna reported 270 "incidents" — guerrilla sneak attacks — in one week of July alone.

The army launched the offensive after its worst debacle in a war in which the government says over 50,000 people have been killed.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Updates Latest Fighting in Kilinochchi, Jaffna

BK3107015096 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 29 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

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Sri Lankan Armed Forces Continue To Shell Kilinochchi

The Sinhala dominated Sri Lankan armed forces are still continuing to direct heavy artillery fire on civilian targets around Kilinochchi which is populated by Tamil people. The once flourishing Tamil town of Kilinochchi has been destroyed by the armed forces and is now a ghost town. The Sinhala armed forces are continuing to fire artillery shells at the homes of the people, on the hospital, at the shops and on every other building in the Town and surrounding areas.

One Army Major and 19 Sri Lankan Soldiers Killed in Army Occupied Jaffna Peninsula

Over the last two days one army major and 19 Sri Lankan soldiers have been killed in the Jaffna peninsula as the occupying Sri Lankan armed forces launched operations to tighten their military grip over the peninsula.

On Sunday [28 July], 10 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed within the top security Sri Lankan Elephant pass army base when the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] forces penetrated the highly secure north side of the base and launched attacks within the camp. All the LTTE fighters returned to base safely after having successfully completed the operation.

On Saturday [27 July], 3 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and 2 more were seriously wounded in Mirusuvil when LTTE forces attacked a 500 strong unit of Sri Lankan soldiers who marched into the village to carry out a search and destroy mission. On the same day another 3 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed and 3 more were seriously wounded a little further away in Varani when the LTTE forces launched an attack on the armed forces who entered the village to round up and attack the villagers.

On Saturday, the Sri Lankan commanding officer for Puloly sector, Major Bakeer was killed and 2 Sri Lankan soldiers were killed in another location in Vadamaratchi as the LTTE forces launched attacks against the Sri Lankan army who were engaged in military attacks on the Tamil people in Jaffna peninsula.

Sri Lankan Armed Forces Attacked in Trincomalee District

Two Sri Lankan armed soldiers were killed and three more were seriously wounded in Pulmoddai in Trincomalee district on July 27, when the LTTE fighters launched an attack on the Sri Lankan armed forces who launched operations on the Tamil civilians in their homeland.

Sri Lanka: Security Forces 'Consolidate' Defenses in Paranthan

BK0108054496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 1 Aug 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security forces Wednesday [31 July] continued to consolidate their defences in Operation 'Sathjaya' and carry out further search and clearing operations within the newly captured town of Paranthan.

Reports said despite Tiger booby traps to obstruct the troops and intermittent mortar attacks by Tigers, the troops continued their forward march.

"The obstacle belt including mines and booby traps set up by the terrorists is not a major factor to delay the advance of troops," military sources said.

However, the troops were taking every precaution about the Tiger landmines to prevent casualties among the troops, official sources said.

Another report said that according to ground troops, the "Paranthan Chemicals" factory had been used for training and accommodation facilities of the Tigers. There was evidence to show that a number of women Tiger cadres too had been accommodated at Paranthan Chemicals.

Military reports said the LTTE leaders had addressed school children in Vishvamadu and Udyarkattu areas in Mullaitivu district and forced them to join the LTTE ranks. "The LTTE leaders are supposed to have said that it is obligatory for children above 10 years to join the LTTE ranks to fight the last battle with the security forces," the reports said.

Military sources said that the troops engaged in 'Sathjaya' are determined to overcome Tiger resistance and destroy LTTE strongholds in the mainland of the northern province.

The Navy on Sunday [28 July] destroyed two Tiger boats moving towards Sangupiddy in Jaffna with nine Tigers on board. The navy also recovered a radio set and several rounds of ammunition.

A Colombo datelined REUTER report by Rohan Gunasekara added:

The Sri Lankan army is pouring troops into the north to bolster a thrust into the heart of Tamil Tiger rebel territory, military officials said on Wednesday.

"The build-up is going on," said one official, who asked not to be identified. "We're strengthening our forces before we resume the advance."

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He said troops were massing at the road junction town of Paranthan, captured on the first day of a new military offensive last Friday [26 July]. But he said there would be no swift move from Paranthan into rebel territory on the northern mainland as the army needed to clear a maze of mines and booby traps laid by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which would take time.

Military officials said the immediate target of the new operation was the town of Kilinochchi, just six km (four miles) south of Paranthan.

The rebels evacuated their wounded from Kilinochchi after it came within range of the army's big guns, they said.

The loss of the Kilinochchi hospital would create problems for the rebels in treating their casualties, many of them wounded in the human-wave attack on an army base at Mullaitivu on the northeastern coast two weeks ago, they said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) shifted its centre of operations to Kilinochchi from the Jaffna peninsula after losing its main base in April.

Before the new military offensive, there were some 150,000 people in Kilinochchi, a town strung out along Sri Lanka's main north-south highway.

Sri Lankan aid workers and diplomats said many of these had left, including most international aid workers, as the army advanced, backed by tanks, helicopter gunships and bombers.

"Some have gone to refugee camps elsewhere on the mainland," said one aid worker. "Others are scattered around the area and are on their own."

Deputy Finance Minister Gamini Lakshman Peiris told reporters on Wednesday the war was hurting the economy with defence spending one-third over budget in little more than seven months of the financial year to December 31.

He said people "realise that a country like Sri Lanka cannot spend 50 billion rupees in part of the year alone, 6.5 percent of GDP...without their economic circumstances being hurt".

The government had allocated 38 billion rupees ($690 million) for defence spending, but Peiris said the figure would reach 50 billion by the second week of August.

A military statement said on Tuesday [30 July] that rebel radio transmissions intercepted by the army had named 54 rebel fighters killed so far in the new offensive. The army says 17 soldiers were killed on the first day.

Some 3,000 guerrillas overran an army base at Mullaitivu on July 18.

Shortly afterwards, two bombs killed at least 57 people on a suburban commuter train in Colombo. The government has blamed the attack on the Tigers, who have denied responsibility.

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